

# PETITION FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY IN AFRICA

*A Catholic pledge for social justice*

We, the Bakhita Partnership for Education (BPE), in concert with the Jesuit Justice and Ecology Network-Africa (JENA), on behalf of the African child, stand before you today. As a faith-inspired coalition, we have united a network of educational and ecclesiastical institutions to advocate for transformative educational systems that honour the dignity and potential of every girl and boy in Africa. We address this petition through the esteemed AU-CIEFFA, the Centre for the Education of Girls and Women.

In this African Union's year of education, we urge you to remember the vulnerable and marginalised, especially in places of crisis, as we seek to illuminate paths of learning that have been darkened by inequality and neglect. Our commitment is unwavering, and our mission is clear: to ensure 100 percent retention and to significantly improve access to and quality of education for all children, especially girls, in the targeted countries and schools.

We call upon you to join us in this holy endeavour, to act decisively and compassionately, ensuring that our collective future is built upon the cornerstone of equitable education for all. We petition:

## 1 Elevate Educational Funding

We call upon your leadership to uphold the commitments made to educational funding and gender equality. We urge the adoption of policies that allocate a minimum of 20% of national budgets to the education sector, as agreed by UNESCO Member States. Such investments should be directed primarily toward infrastructure development, teacher training and salaries, provision of learning materials and technology, scholarships and financial aid, nutrition and health programmes, and early childhood education.

## 2 Zero-rate tax on Sanitary Products

Remove taxes on sanitary products, affirming the dignity of our girls and ensuring they are not hindered by the natural processes of the body God created. Do not tax dignity.

## 3 Education for all

Embrace the marginalised, especially our daughters, with education as their right, not a privilege, thus honouring the feminine genius in our midst.

## 4 Uplift the Marginalized

Uphold the 'preferential option for the poor' by ensuring the marginalized are not forsaken, bringing education to every corner, every heart.

As Catholics, we believe in the sanctity of human life and the potential of every child. Our plea is for action that reflects our values of faith, hope, and love. Together, let us forge a path for our children that leads to enlightenment, equality, and the common good.

*With Hope and Prayer,*

**The African Child, Bakhita Partnership for Education and the Jesuits of Africa.**