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**Read my op-ed with Melinda Gates**  
 Michelle Obama [info@obama.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 07, 2020 12:51 PM  
**To:** Steve Johnston



Hi there,

For the past five months, 15-year-old Fortunate Ayomirwoth's school has been closed. She spends her days at home in a small suburb of Kampala, Uganda, doing chores, caring for her four younger siblings, and hoping there will be enough food for her family. Since her mother lost her job, money has been tight—and for Fortunate, the window of opportunity feels like it, too, is getting tighter.



This is an uncertain time for all of our children, especially when it comes to their education and what school will look like in the months ahead. Sadly, for many girls around the world, the question isn't when they will return to school—it's if they will return at all. Even before COVID-19 struck, more than 98 million adolescent girls worldwide were not in school. Now, due to ripple effects from the pandemic, millions of more girls of secondary school age could remain out of school—not just this year, but possibly forever.

[Melinda Gates and I wrote about why we can't let that happen—and why, as the world determines how to continue educating students in the months ahead, we must ensure that adolescent girls have a chance to learn, to stay healthy, and to stay safe.](#)

Grassroots leaders in the Girls Opportunity Alliance community are working tirelessly to continue to support girls during this challenging time—like the Women's Global Education project in Kenya and Advancing Girls' Education in Malawi, which are delivering lanterns and printed materials and helping girls learn by radio broadcast. And like the Cooperative for Education in Guatemala and Girl Up Initiative Uganda, which are distributing care packages with food and essential supplies to girls like Fortunate and their families.

[I hope you'll learn more about this remarkable work and join me to support these leaders through the Girls Opportunity Alliance Fund today.](#)

What we choose to do now will echo throughout the lives of these girls, their communities, their countries, and our entire world. We owe it to them—to all of us—to support them in this critical moment.

Michelle

*Join us in supporting grassroots leaders working to empower girls around the world through education.*

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