



# MAKE IT RIGHT

## Ending the Crisis in Girls' Education

A report by the Global Campaign for Education & RESULTS Educational Fund

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ACRWC</b>	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child	<b>IFI</b>	International Financial Institution
<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank	<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>ADI</b>	Adolescent Girls' Initiative	<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>ASPBAE</b>	Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education	<b>INEE</b>	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
<b>CAMPE</b>	Campaign for Popular Education	<b>IRC</b>	International Rescue Committee
<b>CAS</b>	Country Assistance Strategy	<b>LDG</b>	Local Donor Group
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women	<b>LEG</b>	Local Education Group
<b>CGA</b>	Country Gender Assessment	<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goal
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child	<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation	<b>MoEST</b>	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development	<b>NER</b>	Net Enrollment Ratio
<b>ECCE</b>	Early Childhood Care and Education	<b>NPEF</b>	Norwegian Post-Primary Education Fund for Africa
<b>EDI</b>	Education Development Index	<b>NIR</b>	Net Intake Ratio
<b>EFA</b>	Education for All	<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organisation
<b>EIT</b>	Equity and Inclusion Tool	<b>ODA</b>	Overseas Development Assistance
<b>ESP</b>	Education Sector Plan	<b>PISA</b>	Programme for International Student Assessment
<b>FAWE</b>	Forum for African Women Educationalists	<b>PPP</b>	Public-Private Partnership
<b>FTI</b>	Fast Track Initiative	<b>P4R</b>	Programme for Results
<b>GAP</b>	Gender Action Plan	<b>QUEST</b>	Quality Education for Social Transformation
<b>GCE</b>	Global Campaign for Education	<b>SACMEQ</b>	Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product	<b>SAP</b>	Structural Adjustment Policy
<b>GEEI</b>	Gender Equality in Education Index	<b>SMC</b>	School Management Committee
<b>GMR</b>	Global Monitoring Report	<b>TEGINT</b>	Transforming Education for Girls in Tanzania
<b>GNP</b>	Gross National Product	<b>UCEP</b>	Underprivileged Children's Education Programme
<b>GPI</b>	Gender Parity Index	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>GRB</b>	Gender Responsive Budgeting	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>ICCLE</b>	International Centre on Child Labour and Education	<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>ICESCR</b>	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	<b>UNGEI</b>	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
<b>IDA</b>	International Development Association	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children Fund
<b>IEG</b>	Independent Evaluation Group	<b>UNIFEM</b>	United Nations Development Fund for Women
<b>IFC</b>	International Finance Corporation	<b>UPC</b>	Universal Primary Completion
		<b>VSO</b>	Voluntary Service Overseas

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**“... in 47 out of 54 African countries, girls have a less than 50% chance of going to secondary school ...”**

# Foreword by Graça Machel

## *President and Founder, FDC and the Graça Machel Trust*

In April of 2000, in the balmy haze of a Dakar spring, representatives from governments, international institutions and CSOs came together to review progress being made in global education and set a bold plan for achieving a breakthrough at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I was one of those urging for a true global compact to achieve Education For All (EFA) and especially for ambitious targets on improving educational opportunity for boys and girls. Together, with advocates of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), we celebrated the securing of commitments to a rights-based set of goals and strategies. Six months later, the world came together again, and reaffirmed its commitments to these goals by setting clear targets for education through the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

However, as this report shows, the promise of those heady days is still far from being realized. We can take encouragement from the fact that the number of children out of school has fallen from more than 100 million to 67 million. And, the gap between girls and boys is closing, with girls now representing 53% of children out of school as compared to 60% at the time we met in Dakar. Yet millions of girls around the world are still denied their right to a full and empowering education, as this report clearly illustrates.

Numerous treaties have affirmed the equal right of girls and boys to a complete quality basic education. And the global community has recognized girls' education as perhaps the single best investment for development. Despite this, GCE's research highlights failures in policy, implementation and financing that cause girls to fall through the cracks in education systems around the world.

It is scandalous to me that in 47 out of 54 African countries, girls have less than a 50% chance of going to secondary school. And, it is tragic to me, as a long-time champion for children in conflict, that girls' lives and schooling continue to be ruined by sexual violence in times of war, in the home, and even in schools.

GCE's report points to a clear way forward. It calls on governments to go beyond current efforts to increase girls' and boys' enrollment, by integrating a rights-based approach across every dimension of education. Pointing to policies and practices that make basic education safer, more appropriate and free of all costs and charges, it draws on examples of success to recommend specific laws and policies that must change. The critical role of international financing institutions is also examined, pointing out how to redress contradictions and shortcomings in their practices. The report goes on to analyze the potential for the world's only global partnership for education — the EFA Fast-Track Initiative — to be the hub of change for gender equality in education. Finally, the report calls for concrete action and leadership by the EFA convening agencies and UN Secretary-General to put gender equality in education at the top of the international agenda for the coming year.

It is now over sixty five years since the right to education was first enshrined in international law. The time for warm words is over. The time for action is now. Women and girls deserve and demand their rights, and I am committed to working with GCE and my fellow advocates for gender equality in education to ensure that their rights are realized without delay or hesitation.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## THE HIDDEN CRISIS IN GIRLS' EDUCATION

Recent progress in getting more girls to enroll in primary school is a cause for celebration. Girls now make up just 53% of the children out of school, as opposed to 60% at the start of the Millennium. Yet this welcome development should not lead to complacency about the issue of education for women and girls. This report reveals the reality behind this apparently sunny picture, showing that once girls get into school they face numerous challenges and are far less likely than boys to keep attending, achieve learning outcomes, and make progress to secondary education.

Using a rights-based framework, the report first examines the efforts of 80 low income countries in making a full cycle of education **available** to girls. Our Availability Table groups countries according to their performance in terms of girls' presence in education throughout the educational cycle up to tertiary level. Countries such as Ecuador, Tanzania and Bangladesh appear in the category of 'Strong Performers' because they have made progress not only in enrolling girls in school, but also in improving their ability to complete primary and progress to secondary school and beyond. At the other end of the scale, countries such as Côte D'Ivoire, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic are deemed to be 'Failing' due to their low rates of girls' primary enrollment, completion and transition to secondary. Scattered across the middle of the chart, countries such as Zambia, Burkina Faso, Pakistan and Mali have mixed results, showing some improvement in getting girls into year 1 of primary school but a dramatic drop in performance when looking at the experience of girls in later years.

A look at the aggregate picture also shows some worrying overall trends: **in 47 out of 54 African countries, girls have a less than 50% chance of going to secondary school**; average primary school completion rates for boys in sub-Saharan Africa stand at 56%, but only 46% for girls. This gaping inequality is a denial of girls' rights and carries with it a serious social and economic cost.

- Educated women are more empowered and better able to demand their rights, as well as having healthier, more economically-secure families.
- A girl who completes basic education is three times less likely to contract HIV.
- Children born to educated mothers are twice as likely to survive past the age of 5.
- A 1% increase in the number of women with secondary education can increase annual per capita economic growth by 0.3%.

## Making rights a reality

Understanding why education is not yet fully available at all levels means digging deeper into the policies and practices of governments. Three further dimensions of the right to education are used to highlight experiences and practices — both negative and positive — in helping girls overcome the formidable barriers to staying in school, improving the quality of their education, and having an enriching learning experience.

**Accessibility of education** looks at what is entailed in making education accessible for every girl and boy, and providing an environment in which all can learn effectively, regardless of location and economic or social status. States should ensure that education is free from all cost, that financial obstacles are overcome including through provision of incentives to poor families, and that school facilities are child-friendly, free from physical barriers, sanitarily adequate and close to home.

**Acceptability of education** discusses the need for states to provide education where the form, content and structure are acceptable for girls as well as boys. States must consider ways to ensure that women teachers are recruited, supported and given equal rights. They must also ensure that teaching and learning processes and spaces be made appropriate and safe for girls, and recognize the link between girls' ability to learn and female literacy.

**Adaptability of education** stresses the importance of structuring education so that it is adaptable and responsive to the diverse needs of girls and boys. It looks at the obstacles thrown up by child labor, child marriage and teenage pregnancy and proposes policies and practices that can be used to overcome these.

The rights-based framework and the case studies underline the importance of ensuring rights not only to but also in and through education for girls. They also highlight key principles that should guide action for change: non-discrimination, participation, accountability and empowerment.

Two in-depth case studies on Mali, and Bangladesh, shed further light on the role of public policy in extending the right to education to all, in the face of scarce resources and strong gender inequalities in society at large. Bangladesh has made impressive gains in ensuring that education is available and accessible to girls. Hardly a surprise then, that it has achieved gender parity in both enrollment and completion of primary school and that its government is going on to pilot innovative approaches to ensuring that education becomes both acceptable and adaptable to girls' particular needs. Mali is not as far down the road to gender equality in education but has made a good start in opening up opportunities to make

education available to girls, with a remarkable 97% increase in girls' enrollment over the last 10 years. It now needs to consider how to translate its notably strong legal frameworks into policy and practice to deliver deeper change in favour of gender equality by removing the obstacles to education being accessible, available and adaptable.

**Good governance**, and particularly **gender-responsive budgeting** situated within wider **macroeconomic frameworks that favour gender equality**, are paramount in achieving gender equality in education. The experiences of countries at the top and bottom of the availability chart are examined, pointing to a need extend public investment in education, protect wages and extend credit opportunities to women and girls.

### Global governance: the role of the international financing institutions

Globalization and related paradigms and institutions have a huge impact on national policies, resources and priorities at national level. Education values and needs are often superseded by governments' need to adhere to policies promoted by the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and **World Bank**.

The IMF has achieved prominence as the 'go-to' multilateral agency for macroeconomic policy advice and funding. As such, it plays a critical role in formulating macroeconomic policies for those countries resorting to IMF loans. The policies advised by the IMF often require severe constraints on public spending. This in turn limits countries' ability to invest sufficiently in girls' education and increases the opportunity costs of educating girls from poor families. It is imperative that the role and policies of the IMF be reconciled with international human rights law including those enshrining the rights of the child, the right to education and women's rights. It is vital that national Ministries of Finance work with the IMF to adopt macroeconomic policies that afford countries the greatest amount of flexibility for spending, avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach that ignores the gendered impact of economic policy frameworks. The fiscal flexibility which the IMF afforded to low-income countries during the worst months of the recent financial crisis should be continued over the medium term to address in an ongoing manner impacts resulting from a range of financial situations, including speculation in food commodities and fuel and inflows of 'hot money'.

The **World Bank** must be consistent in considering gender impacts of its policy and lending instruments, which implies engendering all Bank operations and monitoring thereof. Despite strong gender research, multiple gender strategies and operational policies, and much rhetoric about gender equality, the World Bank is often failing to translate their statements, strategies and policies into tangible reform in their investments. Education operations must be made gender-sensitive and especially seek to promote fee abolition, gender-responsive budgeting and demand-side incentives to target marginalized groups. In order for the new World Bank 'Learning For All' strategy to address the educational needs of marginalized girls, it must include significantly increased investments in adult literacy and early childhood development as key pillars of their learning agenda, while ensuring that girls complete primary and transition to quality post-primary education, particularly through the provision of free secondary education. Its definition of learning should be expanded to include inputs, processes and outcomes that lead to transformation of gender norms rather than reductionist targets for reading and mathematics currently prioritized in Bank benchmarking frameworks.

### Righting the wrongs: towards a global partnership for girls' education

The Education For All Fast-Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) has become the pre-eminent global mechanism for fostering policy dialogue and promoting aid effectiveness principles in basic education. It has also injected funding to countries that have demonstrated their commitment to achieving universal primary completion and gender equality in education. EFA-FTI is now poised to undertake a major replenishment effort based on its commitment to upscale support to ensure that girls access and remain in education throughout the school cycle. However, to make this commitment real, EFA-FTI needs to overhaul its frameworks, tools and financial practices to require sustained and integrated attention to gender equity objectives in primary and secondary education by governments and donors. By promoting policies and practices that have the potential to spearhead a breakthrough in girls' education, the EFA-FTI partnership can galvanize each of its members to align their education investments behind shared gender equality objectives to increase the demand for, and supply of, quality education for girls. On this basis, donors should make substantial and long-term commitments to FTI replenishment, while ensuring that their own operations are comprehensively gender-sensitive.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Strong government plans, backed by resources, must be the centerpiece of efforts to achieve gender equality in education. **All governments should conduct a gender audit of national education strategies. This must be complemented by gender-responsive budgeting to ensure that policies and plans to promote and foster girls' right to education are fully funded. All government plans should address the following:**

1. Governments should conduct a gender audit of national education strategies, complemented by gender-responsive budgeting to ensure that policies and plans include:
  - Progressive elimination of the cost barriers preventing girls from completing primary school and progressing to secondary and tertiary. This should include abolition of fees and other charges and demand-side measures such as stipends, school feeding programs and subsidized or free transportation to school.
  - Improvements in the school infrastructure, such as building separate latrines and ensuring secure school premises.
  - Recruitment policies that ensure balanced representation of men and women in the teaching profession.
  - Measures to eliminate gender bias and stereotypes in teaching and learning, such as ensuring positive representation of women in textbooks, and training in gender-equitable classroom practice.
  - Laws and practices to eliminate and properly address all forms of gender violence within schools.
  - Tracking of progress against equity-based targets for enrollment, progression and learning in a way that disaggregates data by gender, age, grade, wealth, and location, among others.
2. Governments should be open and transparent in their budgeting and planning processes and especially engage women's groups as part of their commitment to broad-based civil society participation in education sector planning and budget oversight.
3. Governments must also table and enact laws to prohibit discriminatory practices in school administration, such as exclusion on grounds of pregnancy or child marriage.

While the main locus of change in the quest to achieve gender equality in education is the State, the role of international institutions remains vital. **The global community must actively engage in efforts to secure equal rights to, in and through education for girls and boys.**

1. The United Nations Secretary-General should convene a high-level event at the UNGASS in September 2011 to raise political awareness of the enduring challenge in gender equality in education, and set out a global strategy to ensure that concrete action is taken to up-scale interventions to achieve gender equality in education at all levels.
2. The high-level event should establish a process for eliciting new commitments to achieve gender equality in education which should report back in 2012.
3. The IMF and Ministries of Finance should ensure that macroeconomic modelling, advice and policy making are gender sensitive and account for the disproportionate burden on women of public sector spending constraints.
4. The World Bank should ensure that all agreements with and operations in client countries are gender sensitive, and that the new Learning for All strategy prioritizes gender parity in access and learning throughout all levels of education.
5. All education donors should make robust 3-year commitments to the FTI replenishment, while scaling up their bilateral support in alignment with agreed gender targets in primary and secondary school, including the progressive elimination of all cost-barriers to education. Bilateral support needs to be predictable and should be targeted towards regions and countries where girls are disadvantaged relative to boys.
6. The international community should create an International Commission on Rape and Sexual Violence to provide monitoring and legal redress for girls living with the trauma or threat of sexual violence.
7. Pursuit of the goal of gender parity in enrollments has obscured the need for balanced attention to, and investment in, policies that will ensure that girls can stay in school and acquire the learning they need to empower them throughout life. The post-MDG framework should include comprehensive targets that address governance and implementation issues, as well retention, completion and learning for girls and boys.



“Equality for women and girls is not only a basic human right, it is a social and economic imperative.”

— United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon (2 July 2010)

# 1 INTRODUCTION

It is 2011, and 1 in 4 women cannot read this sentence. This is a tragedy and a denial of rights on a massive scale. In 2005 the world missed the first target agreed within the framework for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by that year. Although civil society organizations and educationalists protested, the omission passed with little comment or attention from the global community as a whole. Since that date, continued progress has been made at least in the sphere of primary education, with disparity in enrollments gradually shrinking such that girls now represent 53% of out of school children, a marked improvement against the position at the start of the decade when 60% of out of school children were girls (UNESCO 2000). Similarly, the global Gender Parity Index (GPI) in national enrollment rates (NER) which reflects the ratio of girls to boys in primary education now stands at 0.98, a significant shift from the 0.93 of twelve years ago (UNESCO 2000).

This development should not, however, lead to complacency in the international community about the status and experience of girls in education, especially in poorer countries. Despite the presence of more girls in the classroom, millions of girls around the world continue to face discrimination, violence, neglect, exploitation and abuse. Whereas education can play

an emancipating role in empowering and equipping girls with the same life chances as boys, systemic discrimination against women and girls conspires to keep many of the most marginalized females from entering school, learning fundamental skills and pursuing post-primary education. In many countries, the role of women is defined in terms of the domestic, unremunerated work they do to keep households running, and their reproductive role in the family. Economic dependence on men, lack of participation in public spheres such as local governance structures and the labor market, physical and sexual violence and socio-cultural definitions of the ‘appropriate’ role of women all intersect to systematically deny women and girls equal rights — including the one right which has the most chance of transforming their power and self-determination: education. The gendered basis of discrimination against women and girls is even further compounded by other aspects of marginalization such as being a member of ethnolinguistic or religious minorities, being of African descent, living in rural areas, being disabled, or living in the lowest income quintile. Stark intra-national divides between those living in easily accessible areas and those in more marginalized regions can be exacerbated by the cross-cutting disadvantage of gender. For example, in Bolivia, Honduras, Tanzania, Madagascar and many other countries, rich urban boys will spend more than twice as long in education as poor rural girls.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Marginalization due to location, ethnicity, and disability are not exclusive to women and girls, but ‘the deeply engrained gender roles and relations in society tend to intensify these barriers for girls’ (ASPBAE 2010 p.xxi). Indeed, many of the factors that cause marginalization and discrimination against girls are interdependent and exacerbate each other (UNGEI 2010a). While in some countries, such as Brazil, there are indeed more girls than boys in school, choosing to focus on girls is a powerful means by which to facilitate better educational opportunities for the marginalized and socially excluded in all arenas (UNGEI 2010). Gender is an entry-point to assess marginalization due to its cross-cutting nature which reinforces or mitigates discrimination and disadvantage — and measures to ensure that girls can access quality education often benefit other marginalized groups (Dunne, 2009).

The purpose of this report is to show that improved access to education by no means implies an end to girls' marginalization and discrimination in education. It shakes up any premature self-congratulation within the international community and reveals that across the globe girls are still excluded and discriminated-against at every level of education. Although enrollment figures are improving, once girls get into school they face numerous challenges and are far less likely than boys to keep attending, keep learning, and make progress to secondary education. **The right to education continues to be violated for millions of girls and true gender equality in education — and beyond — remains far from being achieved.**

This report addresses this startling reality by examining the state of girls' education in 80 developing countries, based on the conceptual framework developed to elaborate the right to education, known as the 4As. The 4A framework, adopted by the UN Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1999, sets out State obligations in ensuring that education is Available, Accessible, Acceptable, and Adaptable to the needs and circumstances of all children. The report examines the barriers and best practices to ensuring that provision of girls' education corresponds to the 4As. In so doing, it identifies the necessary steps that governments must take to ensure that the right to education is guaranteed for girls as well as boys. The 4A framework provides an integrated set of categories and indicators through which to engage with wider aspects of education than simply looking at enrollment rates. It disaggregates the right to, during and through education (The Right to Education Project 2010, 2009) and provides

an alternative to the narrow focus on the Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) providing a holistic approach to gender equality in education access, sustained engagement in education and achievement of learning outcomes (Wilson 2003). Two in-depth case studies on Mali and Bangladesh shed further light on the role of public policy in extending the right to education to all, in the face of scarce resources and strong gender inequalities in society at large.

Recognizing that governance is a critical component of the enforcement of human rights, this report also examines the global economic paradigms and education development frameworks which have heavily influenced the environment in which domestic education policy is formed. Finally, the report turns to the global education partnership, the Education For All Fast Track Initiative, to identify what the international community of education stakeholders can and must do next to effectively target and scale up interventions to improve gender equality in education.

In 2011, signs have emerged of a renewed interest among donors, partner countries and international institutions in the issue of girls' education. This report sets out priorities for action in the coming period, based on a right-based analysis and a clear commitment to ensure that lessons are learned from the past. Above all, the message in this report should be clear.

***The ongoing violation by governments of their obligation to ensure gender equality in education must end, and it is the responsibility of the global community to support this goal.***

## 2

# A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH: THE 4A FRAMEWORK

Upholding human rights and dignity, fostering social justice, and improving social development and contributing to economic growth: all are compelling reasons to prioritize girls' education. However, the strongest justification for prioritizing education for girls is that it is a human right, enshrined in international and national law. The premise of this report is that human rights law should be more explicitly recognized as the primary foundation for efforts to achieve Education For All (Singh 2011) because it provides a normative basis for assessing education indicators (The Right to Education Project 2009). Although many different indicators and approaches have been used to measure progress towards gender equality, both in education and more generally, the rights-based approach focuses on the responsibility and capacity of governments to implement the right to education (UNGEI 2010b, Moser 2007).

The right to education is outlined in several international and regional human rights treaties, most significantly the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of

Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Between them these constitute 'the most comprehensive set of legally enforceable commitments concerning both rights to education and to gender equality' (UNESCO 2003). The ICESCR specifically contains the most explicit provisions regarding the right to education, where Article 13 articulates the objective of States in regard to primary, secondary and tertiary education and also to the content of that education (The Right to Education Project 2009). Despite this, in comparison with other human rights, the international community has been slow to recognize education as a right, with limited 'efforts to develop indicators for the right to education at the international level' (The Right to Education Project 2010 p.1). **One important reason for this is that education has long been considered principally a development goal rather than a human right.**

The Millennium Development Goals in education have played a positive role in highlighting the need for global action to fulfil the targets in enrollment and gender parity. However, while the goals are valuable in identifying certain aspects of gender inequality, they are reductionist in essence, focus

on equal access rather than equal fulfilment of the right to education, and fail to engage with intra-national disparities (Unterhalter et al. 2010). Although they have created a discourse of accountability for education goals, this discourse has now adopted a rhetoric that hails progress in aggregate enrollment rates while turning a blind eye to the oppression, discrimination, poverty and disempowerment that are the lived reality of many girls around the world, in and out of the classroom. On the other hand, a rights-based framework to analyze the progress of girls in education provides a suitable

overarching framework for pursuing genuine equality in education for girls over the coming decade, ensuring that the political commitments of States cannot be isolated from their legal obligations (Wilson 2003).

To undertake a rights-based analysis of girls' education, this report utilizes the 4A Framework developed by the former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, the late Katarina Tomasevski. There are four different categories used in the 4A framework to assess educational provision.

- 1 AVAILABILITY**  
Is education generally available?

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- 2 ACCESSIBILITY**  
Are there geographic or economic obstacles to accessing education?

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- 3 ACCEPTABILITY**  
What is the content of education?

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- 4 ADAPTABILITY**  
To what extent is education adapted to the needs of different categories of people?

Figure 1. The 4As Framework

By first analyzing the extent to which education is available, based on data from 80 low income countries measuring the level of girls' primary enrollment, sustained attendance, completion, learning throughout primary and transition to secondary, the report shows countries grouped by performance, reflecting how their legal and policy frameworks (and implementation thereof) are succeeding to guarantee that school is available for girls. This baseline assessment is then developed further, by considering issues relating to the other three rights: accessibility, acceptability and adaptability — revealing a more holistic picture of why certain countries are struggling to ensure quality learning environments for girls and others performing well. However, it is important to note that the numbering of these categories does not indicate any form of hierarchy within the framework, as they are each inherently interconnected and should be viewed as a whole. Tuition fees are affected by both accessibility and governance, whilst child labor could be considered an issue cutting across all 4As. In addition, the barriers to ensuring the education is available, adaptable, accessible and acceptable can be encountered at home, at school, and on the road to and from school (Muhammed and Eskander 2005).

The 4A framework is not solely related to gender and is useful for assessing all aspects of education. In the context of this report, within each of the 4As those sub-indicators that are most relevant to gender have been selected for analysis, facilitating cross country analysis and judgement of their performance. This analysis builds upon the strong work of ActionAid and the Right to Education Project, utilizing many of the indicators selected in their process of defining an ideal school environment for good quality education (ActionAid 2011).

There is no shortage of knowledge about the importance of education for women and girls; countless academic publications and project evaluations have documented good practice. However, patriarchy and gender inequality are still structurally embedded in society. Governments have uneven levels of political will and institutional capacity to enact and enforce laws and policies to overcome these factors and thus enshrine the right to education. Moreover even in cases where policies exist they frequently lack the finances and budget frameworks necessary to achieve the right to education.

***This report therefore identifies what legal, political and financial policies and practices will support the realization of the right to education, especially for girls.***

“There is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls ... Without achieving gender equality for girls in education, the world has no chance of achieving many of the ambitious health, social and development targets it has set for itself.”

— Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary-General (2005)



### 3

## GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION IS KEY TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

“Eliminating gender discrimination and empowering women are among the paramount challenges facing the world today. When women are healthy, educated and free to take the opportunities that life affords them, children thrive and countries flourish, reaping a double dividend for women and children.”

— UNICEF (2007)

Education is central to developing a girl’s capabilities, empowering her, promoting awareness and critical thinking, enabling her to claim all other human rights and make more informed decisions (Sen 1999). Education enables girls and women to demand their right to health for themselves and their families, promotes development of legal and policy frameworks that are in tune with gender equity, and advances other policies that promote the fulfilment of all their other rights. It can also increase awareness of legal and judicial mechanisms to protect women from rights violations, including exploitation and domestic violence. It furthermore fosters women’s participation in countries’ democratic life, increasing their participation in decision-making arenas and in formal power structures. Education can transform the unequal power relations which consistently play out in the home and public sphere in the lived experience of women’s oppression, for example by making it less likely that they will send their girl children away to work in domestic contexts or, worse, in commercial sexual exploitation. By providing the knowledge, skills and capabilities to make informed choices, protect and defend themselves from abuse and exploitation and

achieve economic and social self-determination — education is an important catalyst to realize gender equality.

When a girl gets the opportunity to learn by accessing and remaining in good quality schooling it has a transformative effect not only on her own life chances and the realization of her human rights, but also on the wider social and economic environment (Herz and Sperling 2004, UNDP 1995, The Girl Effect 2010, ASPBAE 2010). Educating girls is the key to ensuring improved mother and child health, community development and economic growth.

**Health:** A girl who goes to school is likely to become sexually active at a later age, can make more informed, empowered choices, is less vulnerable, and is more likely to require her partner to use a condom (Vandemoortele and Delamonica 2000, The Basic Education Coalition 2004). For a girl in Africa completing basic education makes her three times less likely to contract HIV (CAMFED 2010). A girl who has gone to school has more control over her reproductive life and is more likely to use contraception to space her pregnancies at healthy intervals (Abu-Ghaida and Klasen

2004). She is also likely to have a smaller family: women with seven or more years of schooling have between two to four fewer children than women who have not been to school (World Bank 1993, Colclough and Lewin 1993, Summers 1994). Prioritizing girls' education also protects the next generation against Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, for example in Tanzania girls are three and a half times less likely, and in the Côte D'Ivoire, girls are five times less likely, to undergo Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting if their mothers have gone to school (UNICEF 2005a).

**Child survival:** Quite simply, the more educated the mother, the healthier she and her child are likely to be. Since 1970, half of the reduction in child mortality under age 5 in 175 countries was due to improvements in the education of women of reproductive age (Gakidou, Cowling, Lozano and Murray, 2010). Children whose mothers have completed basic education are 40% less likely to die in childhood compared to those whose mothers have not been to school (Watkins 2001). They are also twice as likely to survive past the age of five (Bicego and Ahmad 1996) and half as likely to be malnourished (Save The Children 2005). They will have twice the chance of being fully immunized (UNICEF 2005), and are twice as likely to go to school themselves (UNICEF 2005).

**Economic empowerment:** Education enables girls and women to access better and safer employment. One extra year of primary school boosts a girl's eventual wages by 10–20% (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos 2002) and the impact of this increased earning potential is multiplied because women and girls make good use of the money they earn, reinvesting 90% into their families compared to just 30–40% for men (Fortson 2003). The economic impact is also felt on a macro-scale as increasing women's education leads to increased national growth: only a 1% increase in the number of women with secondary education can increase a country's annual per capita income growth by 0.3% (PLAN 2008). On a global level, PLAN (2008) provides a striking estimate: \$92 billion annual earnings are forfeited by 65 low and middle income and transitional countries as a result of failing to educate girls to the same level as boys. This annual loss is not far short of the \$128.7 billion annually provided by donors as Official Development Assistance (ODA), suggesting that the gains to be made in educating girls are on par with the investment in ODA by donors.

## 4

# AVAILABILITY OF EDUCATION

## ENSURING THAT THE RESOURCES ARE IN PLACE SO THAT A GOOD QUALITY EDUCATION IS AVAILABLE FOR EVERY GIRL AND BOY

The **availability** aspect of the Right to Education is based on the premise that human, material and budgetary resources should be sufficient and adequate to ensure Education For All. It requires the existence of staffed and equipped schools — pre-primary, primary and post-primary — and is premised on the notion that there should be freedom of choice regarding schooling with standards that meet the minimum set by the state.

The Availability Table for 80 low income countries is included here with eight indicators which reflect the availability of education for girls and boys throughout the school cycle. The table constitutes a powerful illustration of the shocking disconnect between girls' initial access to education and their ability to enjoy a full cycle of education. The table groups countries into four categories on the basis of their relative progress made in making girls' education available, using data submitted by the government to UNESCO Institute of

Statistics. Data has been converted simply into a value to enable countries to be grouped according to performance. The four categories are countries that are 'strong performers', those that are 'middle performers', those that are 'weak performers', and those that are 'failing.'<sup>2</sup> Countries with less than 50% of data have been placed in a special category ('Shadows') and it should be noted that such countries stand little chance of advancing the cause of girls' education without a basic picture of the distribution of education through freely available data.

(See Availability Table on pages 12–13.)

The first indicator is adjusted NER for girls, followed by GPI for NER, transition from primary to secondary by gender, GPI school life expectancy, % female students in tertiary, girls' survival to grade 5, % change in girls primary NER over the last decade, and % change in girls transition from primary completion to secondary enrollment.

In Eritrea 2 out of 3 girls will never enroll in school. For every 3 girls that start school in Chad, only 1 will still be attending in class 5. In Mauritania only 1 in 10 girls will complete primary school.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed explanation of the rationale for the scoring mechanism please view Annex A.

## AVAILABILITY TABLE

Country	Adjusted NER for girls (%)	GPI for NER (ratio)	Girls transition from primary to secondary (%)	GPI school life expectancy (ratio)	Female students in tertiary (% of total students)	Girls survival to G5 (% of enrollers)	Change in girls primary NER over last decade (% change)	Change in girls transition from primary completion to secondary enrollment (% change)
<b>STRONG PERFORMERS</b>								
Armenia	94.4	1.03	98.3	1.08	56.1	—	0.5	0.5
Bangladesh	93.3	1.08	100	1.03	35.1	66.1	—	—
Bolivia	92.3	1	94.1	0.97	45	84.6	-3.6	5.2
Burundi	99.8	1.01	22.6	0.87	30.5	75.9	203.2	16.8
Ecuador	100	1.03	76.9	1.03	52.9	83.1	0.3	11.6
El Salvador	96.5	1.02	91.8	0.98	54.6	81.6	7.8	4.7
Georgia	92.9	0.97	99.1	1	54.9	95.4	—	0.7
Ghana	76.6	1.01	91.6	0.93	37.3	77.6	29.7	9.5
Honduras	98.3	1.02	86.2	1.11	60	80.3	10.6	—
Jordan	94.4	1.01	98.2	1.04	51.3	—	-0.4	1
Kyrgyz Republic	91.1	1	99.6	1.06	56.4	—	-3.3	2.4
Lesotho	75.5	1.06	66.4	1.05	55.2	69.2	23.8	20.9
Madagascar	99.8	1.01	55	0.96	47.5	50.2	49.4	16.4
Mongolia	99.4	1	98.9	1.12	60.6	95.4	2.2	0.5
Paraguay	88	1	88.9	1.03	56.7	85	-9	-4
Philippines	93.2	1.02	98.1	1.04	54.4	82.5	3.5	0.7
Senegal	76.3	1.04	57.1	0.92	37	70.8	52.1	35.2
Tanzania	97.3	1.01	32.3	0.95	32.3	89.2	93.8	40.7
Tunisia	99.9	1.01	85.8	1.07	58.8	96.3	5.7	10.4
Ukraine	89.6	1	99.6	1.05	54.4	—	—	0
<b>MIDDLE PERFORMERS</b>								
Burkina Faso	60.5	0.89	50.7	0.84	32.1	77.6	109.8	31.4
Guatemala	94.9	0.97	89.7	0.93	50.8	69.8	19.1	-2.8
Indonesia	—	—	92.7	0.98	47.4	89.3	—	14.9
Malawi	93.7	1.05	74	0.97	33.6	42.5	-4.1	-0.7
Mali	69.8	0.83	68.2	0.76	28.9	85.1	87.7t	31.1
Mauritania	78.8	1.07	30.8	1	28.2	83.5	27.1	-16.7
Moldova	89.5	0.99	97.7	1.06	57.3	—	-2.8	0.4
Morocco	88.5	0.97	78.1	0.88	46.9	84.5	36.4	-6.1
Mozambique	89.8	0.94	54.7	0.84	33.1	53.3	93.9	27.2
Rwanda	97	1.03	—	0.99	43.5	50.5	27	—
Sri Lanka	95.6	1.01	97.1	—	—	98.1	—	-2.6
Swaziland	83.7	1.02	—	0.92	49.8	87.9	16.9	—
Thailand	89.4	0.99	88.8	1.07	54.3	—	—	—
The Gambia	71.9	1.03	83.2	0.97	—	72.1	0.6	23.9
Uganda	93.7	1.03	55.3	0.97	44.3	59.4	—	22.4
Uzbekistan	88.8	0.98	98.9	0.97	40.5	—	—	1.9
West Bank and Gaza	77.5	1	97.4	1.09	55.6	—	-22	-0.3
Zambia	93.8	1.03	67.4	—	—	70.4	36.9	25.9
<b>WEAK PERFORMERS</b>								
Cambodia	86.7	0.96	78.6	0.88	34.4	64.8	9.2	10.5
Cameroon	85.6	0.88	45.5	0.85	43.9	79.2	—	44.1
Congo, Rep.	61.6	0.93	62	—	17.3	79.3	—	18

Figure 2. Availability Table: How successful are countries at ensuring availability of education for girls and women?

## AVAILABILITY TABLE (CONT.)

Country	Adjusted NER for girls (%)	GPI for NER (ratio)	Girls transition from primary to secondary (%)	GPI school life expectancy (ratio)	Female students in tertiary (% of total students)	Girls survival to G5 (% of enrollers)	Change in girls primary NER over last decade (% change)	Change in girls transition from primary completion to secondary enrollment (% change)
<b>WEAK PERFORMERS (CONT.)</b>								
Egypt, Arab Rep.	93.4	0.96	—	—	—	96.5	10.2	—
Eritrea	34.4	0.88	81	0.75	25	72	11.2	1.9
Ethiopia	81	0.94	87.3	0.82	23.8	48.8	169.9	—
Guinea	67.8	0.87	40.2	0.72	24.4	64.3	90.6	-33.9
India	88	0.96	81.1	0.9	39.1	70	14.1	-4.3
Kenya	84.2	1.01	—	0.94	41.2	—	32.6	—
Lao PDR	80.7	0.96	76.9	0.86	43.2	67.7	8.9	7.8
Nepal	—	0.98	81.4	—	39.7	63.6	—	10.8
Nicaragua	93.8	1.01	95.7	—	—	55.2	16.1	-2.8
Niger	51.3	0.81	62.1	0.77	29	66.3	147	51.9
Pakistan	60.2	0.84	71.9	0.82	44.5	59.5	31.5	—
Tajikistan	95.6	0.96	97.7	0.85	29	—	3.7	0.7
Timor-Leste	81.8	0.97	87.5	—	40	79.4	—	—
<b>FAILING</b>								
Central African Republic	56.8	0.74	44.7	0.67	30.5	48.5	—	—
Chad	—	—	65.4	0.62	14.7	33.6	—	33
Congo, Dem. Rep.	—	0.9	75.7	0.73	26.1	76.7	—	—
Côte d'Ivoire	52	0.83	45.1	—	33.3	66	7.2	18.5
Iraq	82	0.88	—	—	36.2	—	1.3	—
Nigeria	59.6	0.91	44.1	0.82	40.7	—	7.9	—
Togo	89	0.91	57.8	0.71	—	50.5	18.2	-7.6
Yemen, Rep.	66	0.83	—	0.62	28.7	—	58.9	—
<b>SHADOWS</b>								
Afghanistan	—	0.78	—	0.6	18	—	—	—
Angola	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Benin	86.5	0.87	—	—	—	—	—	—
China	—	—	—	1.05	49.2	—	—	—
Guinea-Bissau	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Haiti	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Korea, Dem Rep.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kosovo	0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Liberia	—	—	60.2	—	—	—	—	—
Myanmar	—	—	72.8	—	57.9	—	—	10.5
Papua New Guinea	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sierra Leone	—	—	—	0.83	—	—	—	—
Somalia	—	—	—	0.53	—	—	—	—
Sudan	—	—	98	—	—	100	—	15.5
Syrian Arab Republic	—	—	95.6	0.96	—	—	—	27.8
Turkmenistan	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vietnam	—	—	—	—	49	—	—	—
Zimbabwe	—	—	—	—	39.5	—	—	—

Figure 2. Availability Table: How successful are countries at ensuring availability of education for girls and women?

## Necessary but insufficient: parity in enrollments paints a misleading picture

Although achieving gender parity is a prerequisite for gender equality, it constitutes a poor proxy on its own for assessing genuine progress in this regard (Unterhalter, North and Exley 2010, Wilson 2003). It remains a useful comparative indicator because the data is widely available and easily calculated, but it fails to provide insight regarding which girls are enrolled, whether they stay attending, what they learn whilst they are in school and what they are able to do with their education once they leave (Unterhalter, North and Exley 2010).

Much of the progress in achieving gender equality in education has been linked to rapid increases in initial enrollment, shown in the first column of the table. However, a closer look shows that even when girls are enrolling in high numbers — such as Tanzania where the number of girls in school doubled to an enrollment rate of 97.3% — they are dropping out almost as quickly. In Tanzania only 32% of girls make the transition

to lower secondary school, and only 1 in 3 university students are women. Similarly in Chad, girls' enrollment in primary increased by over 50% but they are 30% less likely than boys to stay in school. In Burundi, girls' enrollment increased a remarkable 200% — yet 25% will drop out before grade 5. Of those remaining, only 22% of female students will transition to lower secondary. In fact, in 47 out of 54 African countries, girls have less than a 50% chance of completing primary school.

Primary enrollment is therefore a necessary prerequisite for improving gender equality in education, but it is insufficient as a measure of progress: the national enrollment averages hide huge disparities between groups and regions, the enrollment figures neglect low rates of school-readiness and high rates of school drop-out, and fail to capture the qualitative elements of girls' experiences in the classroom and the outcomes of their education. The high rates of drop-out in primary school mean that many girls are leaving school with only one or two years of education, many still unable to read, write or do simple mathematics.

### In Focus ⇒ GIRLS DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL IN MALAWI

Malawi scores modestly on the Availability Table as a 'middle performer' and at first glance its indicators for school availability show positive progress for girls. It is a nation heralded as a success in both moving towards universal access and in improving gender equality with an adjusted NER for girls at 93.7%. However, these figures which only measure official enrollments on the first day of school obscure the dropout crisis, with a huge decrease in the number of students enrolling in Standard 1 and the number still enrolled in Standard 8.

For example, at Golgota school in the Zomba rural district less than 7% of children that enrolled in school in Standard 1 are still attending in the final year of primary as a result of dropout rates. Furthermore, the national pass rates for final primary exams in Standard 8 are well below 50%, indicating that less than 5% of children are completing primary education in areas of Malawi.

The situation becomes even more striking when focusing specifically on girls. In Golgota, less than 2% of girls that enroll in Standard 1 will pass their primary exams. The official national rate of transition from primary to secondary for girls is 74%. On initial observation this statistic appears to indicate a healthy rate of transition. However, it must be considered that this is 74% of those girls who managed to complete primary which, in this school, is less than 2% of those that enrolled in first grade.

This illustrates the disparity between the official statistics and the reality of educational marginalization for girls in rural Malawi. There is

Photo of enrollment figures from the office of the head teacher in Golgota school.

both significant internal disparity within the country which is softened by aggregating national data, but also a likely over-zealous reporting of figures. In Malawi it is girls that are suffering the most educational marginalization, and once again it is clear that there are damaging limitations in focusing on enrollment levels as the primary indicator of gender equality in education.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT FIGURES FROM JANUARY 2008—GOLGOTA SCHOOL IN MALAWI

Standard	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Number Enrolled	271	187	103	95	81	57	69	52	40	49	21	21	33	17	23	7
% survival compared to Class 1	100%	100%	38%	50.8%	29.9%	30.5%	25.5%	27.8%	14.8%	26.2%	7.7%	11.2%	12.2%	9%	8.5%	3.7%

Figure 3: School enrollment in Malawi

## Getting the right start: Early Childhood Care and Education

The availability of educational opportunities at an early age is critical to the future school success of all children, but especially girls. Yet in low-income countries only 18% of children are provided with a pre-primary education (UNESCO 2011). Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) provides the cornerstone for future learning, and adopting a gender-responsive approach from this initial stage of education can have a significant positive impact in ensuring that future schooling remains accessible for girls (UNESCO 2011). Girls that participate in ECCE programs are better prepared to start primary school, cope better and stay enrolled and attend for longer than girls who do not access ECCE (World Bank 2006). The provision of ECCE also helps to mitigate the disproportionate burden of childcare and healthcare on women and girls. ECCE can supplement the care, nutrition and stimulation provided by poor mothers who are often already overburdened with household tasks and other activities in the care economy — while freeing up time for school which their daughters might otherwise spend helping them to care for siblings and sick relatives. ECCE is also the phase of education where initial gender-based assumptions of children are shaped, providing the opportunity to intervene with positive practices to counter the wider social phenomenon of gender discrimination.

Realizing the benefits of ECCE is dependent upon the extent to which educators, curriculum, guidelines, facilitation aids, space, location, support and management all integrate gender concerns into the ECCE environment (UNESCO 2007a). As such, the availability of ECCE should shift from being considered an optional extra to being recognized as a core stage of the education process and an essential entry-point for gender-sensitive values and practice. By implementing comprehensive pre-primary programs as part of traditional national education strategies and ensuring full gender integration in ECCE programs, governments can mitigate the nutritional, educational and social discrimination which girls may face in the early years and which hugely impact their life chances — while supplementing the burden on mothers of care and nutrition. **Both domestic laws and international laws should be amended to clarify the ambiguous status of ECCE in educational rights frameworks to ensure that it is compulsory, free and equitable.**

## Literacy for all underpins and enhances girls' education

One of the starkest reflections of the widespread discrimination against women across the world is the rates of adult illiteracy: of the 796 million adults who cannot read, nearly two thirds of them are women. Education systems have historically catered to males, often developed with the purpose of training civil servants and other male-dominated vocations. The legacy of the widespread exclusion of girls and women from education is today seen in the high rates of female illiteracy, which provide a corresponding view of the level of acceptability of education — marking out on national maps where adult learning and literacy training are not provided for women. And in many countries the figures are shocking. In Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger less than 25% of adult women are able to read. In Bangladesh, Pakistan, Morocco, Yemen and Mauritania less than 50% of adult women are able to read.

However, women's literacy can have a huge impact on household power relations, the level of her children's participation in primary school and their performance in school, women's participation in local governance structures such as school management committees and mothers' associations, and mothers' income-earning potential. **Promoting women's literacy as a means by which to enhance girls' sustained participation in primary school is a strong, forward looking intervention which recognizes the vital role of parental assistance within the learning process and the engagement of the family in girls' improving the environment for learning.**

Yet access to effective literacy programs remains a sincere and daunting challenge, especially for women. Literacy has been described as the forgotten goal in the Education For All Framework, confirmed by reviews of adult literacy programs which point to an overall picture of sustained neglect (Global Monitoring Report 2011). One comprehensive regional assessment found few detailed strategies and concluded that approaches to literacy instruction are unspecified and underfunded (Global Monitoring Report 2011). The same social barriers that keep women from attending school also hinder their ability to access literacy programs.

Fundamentally transforming gender relations will not only require major efforts to ensure that girls are in school and learning, but also

"The reason that ECCE is so important is that most of the parents did not go to school and get educated and so they are not able to coach their children how to read. ECCE compensates for the lack in the family where the parents cannot provide that early initial education in the first few years. This is so important, especially for the poor families in Bangladesh."

— Ms. Roushan Jahan, former President of Women for Women in Bangladesh

"We need to introduce and popularise ECCE and this will help address the challenge of all those children that dropout at primary: ECCE significantly reduces the dropout rate from primary. Indeed, If we can introduce proper ECCE then I believe that this will be the key to reducing the dropout rate across the nation."

— Mr. Habibur Rahman, Director Education Sector, Save the Children

Providing every mother in sub-Saharan Africa with secondary education would save the lives of 1.8 million children every year. — UNICEF (2005)

PRIMARY EDUCATION	SECONDARY EDUCATION
Average teacher pay: \$4322 per annum	Average teacher pay: \$8860 per annum
Pupil/Teacher ratio of 50:1	Pupil/Teacher ratio of 40:1
Teaching hours: full school day	Expected teaching load: 30 periods per week of 45
Teacher cost per student: \$86	Teacher cost per student: \$335

Figure 4. Cost structure for primary and secondary education, Lesotho

that women have access to basic education, especially where they have historically been denied educational opportunities. Despite this, adult literacy is not a global priority, and rarely is it a national priority. National expenditures on adult education fall far below the recommended target of 3% of national education budgets — with only a few developing countries coming close to committing sufficient resources to literacy programs. **Investments must be increased to at least 3% of budgets, targeted to women, and maximize the impact of ‘training the trainers’ literacy programs which generate employment in literacy training for adult graduates.**

### A distant horizon: girls have scant chance of post-primary education

As demonstrated in the Availability table, there is a disturbing rate of dropout for girls between the primary and secondary levels of education. Although girls may make it through primary school and even pass their graduation exams, they stand a much smaller chance of transitioning to and completing secondary education. The lack of secondary schools, absence of qualified teachers, the increase in school costs at secondary level, inappropriate curricula, socio-cultural barriers related to the onset of adolescence and the role of women in the family, and other myriad factors create a complex matrix of problems which mean that secondary school is not available to the majority of girls living in resource-scarce environments.

While the key challenges at secondary level are systemic in nature and will require major structural reform to overcome in many countries, a significant barrier to the expansion of access to secondary education is financial. The cost per student at secondary is often 3 to 5 times greater than at primary because of a combination of factors: a more diverse curriculum, more subjects, greater investments in infrastructure and better qualified more highly paid teachers (NPEF 2007). The educational cost structure in Lesotho exemplifies this above.

The data for university level enrollments shows the consequences of years of marginalization of girls in education. In the majority of countries in Africa, less than one third of university students are women and Lesotho and Tunisia are the only countries in Africa where women are not a minority at tertiary level. In the Central African Republic, Niger, Chad and Malawi fewer than 1 in 200 girls go to university, while in Afghanistan and Congo, less than 20% of university students are female; little surprise then that they languish in the lower performance categories in the Availability table.

While the Availability Table shows how girls fare relative to boys in participating in different levels of schooling, it does not reveal the extent to which policies and practices ensure that education is also accessible, acceptable, and adaptable to girls so that they stay in school and fully benefit from quality education. This report goes on to show how the laws and policies that countries adopt can support or undermine the availability of education through the framework of the remaining 3As.

## RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING AVAILABILITY OF EDUCATION

Governments should pursue integrated education policies that include early childhood care and education and adult literacy programs and full availability of primary and post-primary formal schooling and adult literacy programs.

- Governments must urgently expand availability of primary and secondary schooling places, with properly qualified teachers and secure infrastructure, to ensure availability to all, underpinned by sufficient resources and good policies to ensure accessibility, acceptability and adaptability.
- Governments should use rights-based disaggregated indicators to assess qualitative aspects and identify reasons for dropouts and disparities between girls and boys as well as groups and regions, especially rural areas.
- Governments must designate a lead agency for policy on young children and early childhood care and education, increased and better-targeted funding for the sector, and upgrading of staff training and salaries.
- Governments must scale up adult literacy programs by increasing budgetary allocations to at least 3% of education budgets, ensuring adequate pay, professional status and training opportunities for literacy educators and taking active government responsibility for adult literacy planning and co-ordination.
- Governments must urgently expand availability of primary and secondary schooling places to ensure availability to all, underpinned by sufficient resources and good policies to ensure accessibility, acceptability and adaptability.

# MALI: CASE STUDY

## From Policy to Practice

31% of Mali's 14.1 million people live below the poverty line and, according to the Demographic Household Survey (DHS), 54% of its population are children under the age of 15 (CIA Fact sheet 2011, Perezniето 2009). 80% of the population are involved in agriculture and fishing, with 64% of people living below the national poverty line (Cherry and Mundy 2007, UNDP Republique de Mali GPRSP 2007–2011). Mali's education system has experienced rapid growth over the past 15 years, with dramatic increases in average primary school enrollment and completion. Generalized efforts to increase the availability of education have led to between 15–20% increases in the number of children enrolled in primary school just since 2004. There has been a dramatic expansion of the education system through the increase in community schools, which are initiated, built and maintained at the community level (with some contributions from the state) and which increased more than seventeen-fold from 176 in 1995 to 3120 in the 2007–08 school year. While the state is still the largest provider of education (providing education to some 60% of pupils), community schools have expanded school supply dramatically, particularly in rural areas (Pearce, Fourmy, and Kovach 2009). Nevertheless, the ongoing challenge remains to bring the community schools within the state framework.

These broader efforts to increase enrollment have indeed led to increasing numbers of girls in primary school and Mali is within 10 percentage points of being on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goal on gender parity in primary enrollments (World Bank GMR 2011). The graph demonstrates

this consistent progress in increasing school availability and improving enrollment rates. However, the graph also shows that the disparity between males and females has persisted, and efforts to reduce the inequality between boys and girls have thus far failed to eliminate the gender gap. The gender gap is even more evident at higher levels of education: by secondary school only 23% of girls are enrolled, compared with 37% of boys. And by university, just three% of girls will still be in education compared to nine% of boys. This exponential growth in gender disparity throughout the school cycle means that only 10% of secondary school teachers are female, and the literacy rate for women is only 18% compared with 35% for men. The absence of women in the workforce is noticeable, with just 39% of females participating in the formal labor force while almost twice the number of men — 68% — participate in the labor force. At the same time, the informal economy benefits from widespread child labor, with 80.6% of children from the poorest quintile involved in some sort of work (DNSI 2006). Politically women also face substantial barriers, with just 10% of seats in the national parliament held by women and efforts to pass legislation strengthening the protection of women have suffered defeat in recent years (see example of the Code de la Famille in part VII). In short, the multiple forms of exclusion faced by women in Malian society are reflected in its education system.

Nevertheless, the government has made various efforts over the course of the past decade and a half to reform the education system, expand schooling opportunities and improve the participation of girls in education. The government and

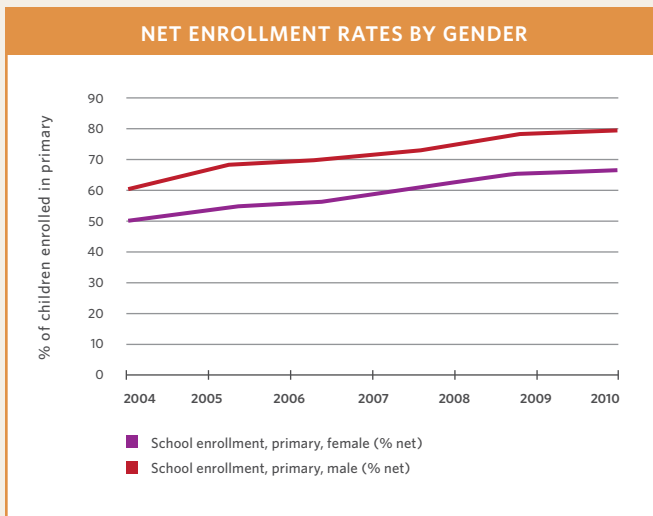


Figure 5. Net enrollment rates, Mali

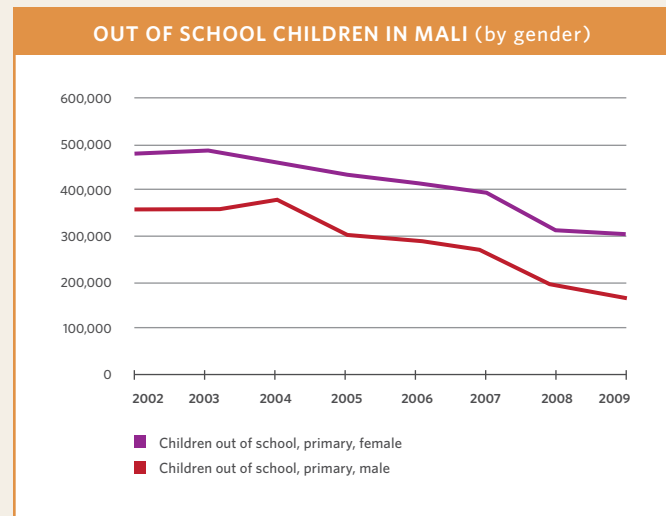


Figure 6. Out of school children, Mali



development partners have also implemented a series of education system reforms, legal frameworks, girl-specific programs and school-based approaches in efforts to improve girls' education.

### Education sector program

Between 1990 and 2000, the *Cellule Nationale de Scolarisation des Filles* (Girls' Education Unit) within the Ministry for Education was created to coordinate local and regional gender mainstreaming efforts and a post of *Conseiller Technique de Genre* (national gender advisor) was established. After 2000, alongside the adoption of the Dakar Framework for Action on Education For All and the third Millennium Development Goal on gender parity, three phases of the *Programme d'Investissement pour le Secteur de L'Education* (Education Sector Program, or PISE) were implemented under the government's education strategy, the *Programme Decennel de Developpement et de l'Education* (PRODEC), which have successively increased the centrality of girls' education in national education policy. In PISE I and II which ran from 2001 to 2010, girls education was mainstreamed with diverse activities overseen by the new Technical Advisor for Girls Education.

### Legal frameworks

A series of laws enshrine girls' right to education in Mali. Mali is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which it ratified in 1990. The 1992 Constitution outlines the right to free and public education and the *Loi d'Orientation sur l'Education*, passed in 1999, further defines this right. However, these provisions are far from being effectively implemented and, within the wider legal framework, there remain impediments to the realization of girls' education. One example is the legal marriage age which is set at 15 years for girls if the parents consent (18 years for boys). This reflects the widespread practice of early marriage which is one of the major reasons for girls' leaving school. There have been efforts to increase the minimum marriage age for girls to 18 years through the draft *Code de la Famille* (Family Code) however this has met with resistance amongst certain sectors of society and the draft law remains to be adopted.

Throughout the 1990s a series of administrative laws were passed introducing specific measures to facilitate girls' access to education, for example, Circular letter (No. 00-34/DNEF 1 February 1993) allowed the return to school of girls after pregnancy, Order No. 03 (July 25, 2003 1613/MEN-SG) guaranteeing state funding for secondary enrollment of girls at age 19 with a basic education diploma and Order No. 00-2223 (ME-MEF 11 August 2000) providing affirmative action for girls through the allotment of an additional point on university scholarship programs.

### Education system reforms

Under the ongoing process of decentralization in Mali which involves transferring authority for education provision and financing to local level *communes*, resource provision by the state became linked to levels of overall enrollment and girls enrollments. Institutional responsibility for girls education was devolved to *Académies d'Enseignement* (AE), *Centres d'Animation Pédagogique* (CAP), with responsibility for school management devolved entirely to school management committees (CGS). The CGS were mandated a minimum quota for female members and sub-committees on the promotion of girls' education were put in place, such as Mother's Associations who monitor girls school attendance and conduct parent outreach. At the same time, negative stereotypes of women and girls were directed to be removed from all textbooks, all indicators under PRODEC were sex-disaggregated and broad sensitization campaigns were undertaken to change popular perceptions of girls' education.

### School level interventions

Alongside the efforts of the Ministry of Education, several interventions at the school level were expanded (largely through the impetus of national and international NGOs and donors): cash transfers, scholarships and material rewards such as bags and books, school feeding programs and dry ration distributions, girls clubs and school sanitation clubs with equal participation of boys and girls, second chance learning programs for girls, teacher training in active teaching and gender sensitive practices. Programs to reinforce self-esteem, empowerment and resilience have also been scaled up, albeit in a fragmented manner, by civil society organizations.

For example, the Forum for African Women Educationalists supports these programs in 545 partner schools across Mali. Women's literacy programs have also helped to change the relationships of women and men in villages, allowing women to run small businesses, manage money and work. Multi-purpose centers for women and girls and the creation of women's cooperatives (especially in rural areas) improved the ability of women to forgo the domestic help of daughters.

Yet further efforts are needed to continue to increase school availability, for example providing schooling opportunities for children in nomadic communities, while also improving the acceptability, accessibility and adaptability of school, especially for girls.

### PISE III

Under the third phase of the PISE, from 2010 to 2012, the government has outlined a more ambitious and concrete strategy to reduce the gender gaps in education. First, gender is no longer mainstreamed throughout all programs (which lead to weak accountability for gender-specific objectives) but has been constituted as one of six sub-components of the basic education program (with its own plan, budget and evaluation). The aims of the girls education strategy are to 1) reduce the gender gap from 18% to 15%, 2) increase the number of female teachers from 35% to 45%, 3) build capacity of girls' education stakeholders, 4) ensure monitoring and supervision of girls education activities in decentralized education structures. In order to achieve these objectives PISE III lays out several strategies and activities to achieve the above objectives: implementing demand-side incentives for girls such as stipends and reward schemes, sensitization campaigns including to improve the promotion of women in school administration and in communities, building 1000 separate latrines, reducing the costs of education for poor families, curriculum and teacher training reform especially in equitable class practice, capacity building programs for school management committees including increasing women's participation and addressing the educational needs of girls in domestic work roles.

The *Plan d'Action Pour la Scolarisation des Filles* (PASCOFI) sets out a clear framework of activities to implement the PISE III girls' education subcomponent, including targets in pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education, as well as girls' performance. An ad hoc girls' education commission which brings together government and civil society is now in place to ensure the effective and accelerated implementation of the PASCOFI. Yet one ministry official in the Girls' Education division estimated in early 2011 that only \$919,173 was available of the estimated \$112,153,805 required to implement all the activities, signifying a gross lack of resources to allow policy to become practice. Although the government has committed to increase the education budget as a percentage of the total national budget from 33% in 2009 to 35% in 2012, there continues to be a major shortfall in the financial resources to scale up girls' education strategies (République du Mali 2010).

### Remaining challenges

*Financing:* The government spends a large portion of the national budget on education (33%) and Mali's recurrent education expenditure now represents 24% of the total government recurrent expenditures (or 3.06% of GDP), excluding debt (EFA-FTI 2011).<sup>3</sup> Yet of those recurrent education expenditures, as of 2008, only 35.6% was spent on primary education, despite the low primary completion rate (World Bank 2010). A recent World Bank County Status Report found that "intra-sector distribution of resources is not sufficiently in favor of primary education" and the financial contribution from poor families (19% of total costs per child) is unfair due to the lower out-of-pocket costs levied from more privileged families with children in upper secondary and tertiary education (10%) (World Bank 2010). Both the under-allocation of resources to primary education and the disproportionate burden of out-of-pocket costs to poorer families must be redressed if the right to education, particularly that of accessibility, is truly going to reach all children in Mali. In addition to the resource limitations, Mali must also proactively scale up interventions to address ongoing barriers to girls' education under the following categories:

*Decentralization:* The lack of human resources, financial resources and support for a coherent division of responsibilities among sub-national levels of education authority means that the system itself faces major constraints in the provision of education. Political appointments and lack of capacity amongst some officials have led to unqualified management personnel at national, regional and local levels. Furthermore, the lack of clear and enforced contractual arrangements between different stakeholders, including for transfer of resources, teacher management and training, has led to a fragmented education system of poor quality.

*Teachers:* The lack of female teachers is compounded by poor completion of secondary by girls and limited options for teacher training, promotion of female teachers and salary and housing options. Gender-sensitive teacher training is not systematically managed, with some teachers reported to have undergone the training three times and others having no training in gender issues. Many classrooms lack sufficient teachers with as many as 100 students per teacher and many teachers taking double-shift classes to reduce class size. In addition, the low salaries and status, lack of professional development for under-qualified community teachers, scarcity of teaching supports, and poor morale mean that many teachers are not incentivized to improve teaching quality, comply with codes of conduct or reduce absenteeism.

*Socio-cultural:* The value of girls' education is still not widely appreciated, with many families still preferring to keep girls home for domestic work, to enter girls into marriage as soon as they hit adolescence and to maintain the role of women in the unpaid care economy. Wider sensitization campaigns will be needed to mobilize greater public support for girls' education and for women's rights more generally.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.educationfasttrack.org/media/Misc./CF%20WB%20Progress%20report%20April%202011.pdf>

# 5

## ACCESSIBILITY OF EDUCATION

**MAKING EDUCATION ACCESSIBLE FOR EVERY GIRL AND BOY AND PROVIDING AN ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH ALL CAN LEARN EFFECTIVELY, REGARDLESS OF LOCATION AND ECONOMIC OR SOCIAL STATUS**

“The most significant factor in improving girls’ education in The Gambia has been the scholarship trust fund initiated by the government, it has really helped us because it is specifically focused on helping pay for girls in grades 7-12. It helps us because the next big challenge for education in The Gambia is in regard to completion rates for girls’ at secondary. Parents still have to meet other costs despite the scholarships and girls are the first to be withdrawn. They have to pay for books, lunches, uniforms etc.”

— Matarr Baldeh, Co-ordinator of EFANET in The Gambia

Accessibility is based on the premise that education systems should not discriminate on any grounds, and that proactive measures should be taken to overcome both physical and economic barriers to accessing school. Within this range of indicators, the following were selected as having the greatest impact on the accessibility of education for girls: school fees, sanitation, distance from school, women teachers, stipends and other demand-side interventions.

### **Overcoming financial barriers: fee-free and compulsory is the way to go**

Even if education is available, it will remain inaccessible to the lowest income groups due to the costs of school. The cornerstone of a national strategy to eliminate gender disparity in education must be the provision of free and compulsory education. In a fee paying context, when faced with an economically driven choice between sending sons or daughters to school, poor families will usually send their sons because of the perceived (and real) greater future economic security they will provide (UNICEF 2004). Evidence abounds of the gendered impact of school fees: the introduction of free primary education in Uganda — a middle performer on availability — caused total girls’ enrollments to rise from 63% to 83% and, most strikingly, enrollment among the poorest fifth of girls increased from 46% to 82% (Herz and Sperling 2004). On the other hand, making school compulsory and free, as did India when it passed the Right to Education Act in 2009 guaranteeing free education for every child between the ages of 6 and 14, can help to ensure girls entry into school. At the same time, infrastructure must be in place to cope with demand (Brown 2011).

The importance of free access to secondary education is also widely recognized (Lewin and Caillods 2001, Lewin 2007). It is a crucial stage in the education system, especially for girls, when pressure to engage in sexual activity, to

marry and have children or to join the labor market may lead to high drop out at the end of primary school and low demand for secondary school education. On the other hand, secondary education can challenge the gendered roles of girls and women, while providing resources and support to mitigate the increased physical and social vulnerability associated with the onset of puberty. It is also the context in which most future primary school teachers are trained and it is where future university students receive initial foundational training (Lewin and Caillods 2001). **It is therefore critical that the movement to eliminate fees for primary education which was launched in the past decade be extended to secondary school and post-primary education — both to reduce the barriers to demand that girls’ families may experience and to ensure that the costs of school do not exclude the lowest income quintile.**

### **Demand matters: easing the burden on families**

Even when education is theoretically without charge there can be a wide range of associated indirect costs that often remain in place (ActionAid 2011). These indirect fees include such things as charges for school management committees (SMCs), uniforms, escorts for girls to get to school, supplementing teacher salaries or finding suitable secure housing for female teachers to stay in rural communities to teach girls (Herz and Sperling 2004). So while school fees may have been officially abolished, other costs may continue to make education unaffordable and therefore push children out of school and into the labor market (ILO 2002).

Attention should also be given to counteracting the opportunity costs associated with women. Opportunity costs are the benefits that are given up in order to participate in an endeavour. As women feel overburdened, they turn to their available resources to meet the essential tasks of the

Uganda is a 'middle performer' on the Availability Table, scoring well on GPI at primary but poorly on girls' transition to secondary. Lack of awareness regarding girls' sanitary needs due to menstruation has a significant negative effect on school accessibility at the secondary level. Research conducted by the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) in Uganda found that when these provisions were lacking, the most common option taken by girls who suffer menstrual accidents at school is to return home and stay there for the days the cycle lasts. This means that affected girls are absent from school for about four days per month, in addition to the other household obligations that they are required to fulfil. (FAWE 2004) The infrastructural changes that are required to ensure improved accessibility within this context must be accompanied by raising awareness for both girls and boys. In research with girls in Uganda, 94% reported problems at school during menstruation and 61% reported staying away from school, confirming that the lack of appropriate provision is a major cause of school dropout.

When the girls were asked how the situation could be improved, 94% responded by saying that there was a dual approach needed, 'teach us correct facts and educate the boys' (QUEST no date). It is clear that improving the attendance and sustained engagement of girls in school requires more than the construction of adequate sanitation facilities. Indeed, 'a combination of education, communication and construction' is necessary in ensuring that not only do girls have well-designed facilities but that they know how to use them correctly and are taught appropriately (IRC 2006 p.3). Raising awareness and educating girls and boys around menstruation is a complex task that requires a multi-sector, joined up approach (Challender and North 2005). Uganda again provides example of this, where FAWE is campaigning for the government to provide free sanitary pads to girls at school to facilitate their sustained participation and learning, and alongside this is holding sensitisation workshops in order to help bring the subject into open conversation.

unpaid care economy. In these cases, the opportunity cost of schooling is high as the present need in the family outweighs the future benefit of schooling. For example, a small-scale study by the Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS) in Nepal found that a child studying at primary level can do household chores of worth Rs.4607 (\$64) and Rs.8792 (\$122) for a child studying at secondary level (UNESCO 2006a). With school costing as much as \$25 a year, the opportunity cost and direct costs of education to a poor Nepalese family can weigh heavily on their means. In light of the very real sacrifices that families must make in the short-term, the long-term benefits of education may require immediate investments outside of household means. Due to cultural norms and available economic opportunities, girls tend to be the first ones removed from school to help with domestic duties or to engage in income-generating activities.

In this context, additional demand-side incentives have been proven to be effective if they are well-designed, appropriately structured and sufficiently targeted. Economic incentives such as cash transfers and stipends that are conditional on girls delaying marriage, meeting minimum attendance and performance criteria and remaining in education have also demonstrated some success (Schurmann 2009). These interventions are not a panacea as they cannot challenge the normative and political context of inequality between men and women, nor can they guarantee that the education received is of good quality, but they hold significant potential for making education more accessible for girls. Still, stipend programs and conditional cash transfer programs have been employed in settings as diverse as Brazil, Yemen, Nepal, Tanzania, Malawi, Madagascar, Gambia and Kenya — with outcomes such as reduced drop-out, increased teacher attendance, improved exam performance, delayed marriage, reductions in risky sexual behavior and fewer children.

An example of a long-term, effective demand-side intervention for girls is that of the girls' stipend scheme in Bangladesh, a high-performing country that is examined further in an in-depth case study. The stipend scheme is an example of positive discrimination for girls: while education is free for both girls and boys at the primary level, it is only girls that also receive free secondary education (ASPBAE 2010). The clear positive impact can be seen by the fact that overall drop-out rates for stipend awardee girls is 1.3% and for non-awardee girls is 50.3% (ASPBAE 2010). The scheme has also helped instigate an improved pass rate for girls in the secondary education exams. Pass rates have increased dramatically since 2001, when they were 33.7%, to 2009, when they were 65.5% (BANBEIS 2011). The Bangladesh secondary stipend scheme for girls was first introduced in 1992, and demonstrates the value of widespread and long-term interventions for girls, having considerable impact over two decades. **By adapting and replicating appropriate and well-targeted demand-side incentives through cash transfer programs and stipend schemes, the direct, indirect and opportunity costs of education for girls can be offset.**

### Improving sanitation: safe, private and clean environments for girls

Effective sanitation in schools is a vital part of ensuring that education remains accessible to girls. The poor facilities in many schools, including lack of water, soap, privacy and insufficient toilets, all serve to reduce girls' enjoyment of school, attendance and levels of attainment (IRC 2006, World Bank 2005, UNICEF 2004). Indeed, it is estimated that up to 1 in 10 school-age African girls 'do not attend school during menstruation, or drop out at puberty because of the lack of clean and private sanitation facilities in schools' (Kirk and Sommer 2006). Poor sanitary facilities also have a negative impact on women teachers (VSO 2010). Where there are no

private toilet facilities available at school, the majority of girls and even female teachers will not attend during menstruation because the facilities are not in place for them to take care of personal hygiene (IRC 2006, World Bank 2005, UNICEF 2004). Girls also face an increased vulnerability to violence, including rape and harassment, due to a lack of separate latrines at school (Okwirry 2006). It is clear that having private latrine facilities in schools is critical and must be recognized as a basic educational right rather than an additional benefit (Herz and Sperling 2004).

Despite the urgency of this situation, it often remains a neglected issue. For example, in Zambia, only one third of primary schools have permanent toilets and new schools are still being constructed without sanitation facilities.

**Government infrastructure plans need to include measures to ensure toilets and other sanitary facilities are constructed in all new schools, with older schools progressively upgraded to include them (Harvey and Adenya 2009).**

### Close to home: why school location counts

Across sub-Saharan Africa the average school life expectancy for girls is 7.6 years and the average school life expectancy for boys is 9.0 years. Girls are clearly disadvantaged, but the situation is particularly severe for those living in rural areas. Across the region, girls who are poor (bottom 20% of wealth) and live in rural areas have an average school life expectancy of just 1.9 years (average school life expectancy in the 29 countries where the data is available). In many rural regions the most significant issue preventing girls from attending is simply one of distance between home and school. The necessity of walking many miles each day, regardless of extreme weather conditions, affects both boys and girls. Girls are particularly vulnerable to abuse whilst on their long daily walk and many

parents prevent girls from going to school because of fears for their safety (UNICEF 1999).

**Ensuring that there is safe transport to and from school (adult accompaniment, bicycles, bussing etc.) is a key way to make enrollment and sustained participation in education more accessible for girls (Muhammed and Eskander 2005). Alongside this, providing additional schools helps ensure education is accessible to girls in rural regions.** Burkina Faso has adopted this approach, establishing a network of ‘satellite schools’ for the first three grades of primary school. These schools allow the youngest children to receive education close to their villages and then make the transition into established schools that are further away once they are older (UNICEF 2004). Policies like these have helped Burkina Faso achieve a stunning 109% in girls’ enrollment at primary level, helping it become a ‘Middle Performer’ in the Availability Table.

A potential alternative route forward in promoting gender equality and improving accessibility where the distance to school is too great is the provision of state-funded, accessible boarding schools (UNESCO 2005). This approach is contentious and has encountered mixed results for girls. In Malawi, research demonstrates that boarding schools provide security and protection to girls (UNESCO 2005). Similarly, in very isolated communities, providing boarding schools can reduce the cost of educating children, such as in the high mountain area of Nepal, where it would be too expensive to maintain the number of very small schools that would be needed to site a school within an easy day commute of every community (UNESCO 2005). Conversely, research in Zimbabwe and Nigeria indicates that girls in boarding schools face an increased risk of becoming pregnant and then dropping out of schools. In this context, the risk prevents parents from sending adolescent girls to boarding schools (UNESCO 2005).

## RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING ACCESSIBILITY OF EDUCATION

- Governments must immediately abolish fees at primary level and progressively remove fees at post-primary level for girls and boys. Violence and sexual abuse against girls must not be tolerated and perpetrators must be held to legal account for their violations.
- Governments must provide well-designed, targeted and appropriately structured demand-side incentives such as stipends and cash transfers to counteract indirect and opportunity costs and ensure that girls complete primary and transition to secondary. These should specifically stipulate that payment is made only if children go to school and do not work.
- No school should be without separate toilet facilities for girls. Efforts to upscale school infrastructure should be complemented by community awareness programs on health and sanitation.
- Governments should increase the number of schools — including boarding and satellite schools where appropriate especially in remote and rural areas.
- Governments should ensure that girls have safe transport to schools, via public transportation, parental or community accompaniment or provision of bicycles.

# 6

## ACCEPTABILITY OF EDUCATION

### PROVIDING EDUCATION WHERE THE FORM, CONTENT AND STRUCTURE ARE ACCEPTABLE FOR GIRLS AS WELL AS BOYS

The **acceptability** dimension of the Right to Education focuses on ensuring that the content of education and teaching methods are relevant, culturally appropriate, of good quality, and uphold the human rights of all those involved. Within the context of girls' education, the acceptability of education is impacted by levels of violence and abuse against girls, literacy rates by gender, administrative rules to expel girls due to pregnancy and gender equity in the curriculum and school personnel.

#### Valuing women teachers: gender and the teaching profession

The presence of a female teacher can help girls and parents feel more confident in sending their daughters to school. In addition to protecting girls from potential abuse, having female teachers provides girls with role models (Herz and Sperling 2004). Increasing the number of female teachers also has the potential to increase enrollment (Nilsson 2003), with this correlation especially strong in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO 2006). Well-trained, motivated, female teachers are a key factor in ensuring gender equality, especially at the secondary level as they

serve as effective role models for girls (and, importantly, for their families) and therefore promote their sustained participation (VSO 2011). However, there is a stark shortage of female teachers in many low-income countries. In Liberia, Somalia and the Central African Republic, fewer than 1 in 5 primary school teachers are female.

Female teachers are particularly important at secondary level, at the point when the factors pushing girls out of education begin to intensify. One indication that Bangladesh is serious about extending gains in girls' education is the fact that it has a policy to prioritize female *secondary* school teachers, with the target of 30% of secondary school teachers being female (ADB 2010). However, this policy is a response to a striking imbalance which is also found in many poor countries: only 29% of secondary school teachers are female in sub-Saharan Africa; South and West Asia fare little better, with only 35% of secondary school teachers being females. Gender disparities in primary level are compounded over time with fewer female graduates trained in teaching, contributing to the current trend of hiring untrained or under qualified teachers.

“Bangladesh may increase the budget allocation for education, but then what, what will the money be spent on? That is the important issue. We need to focus on learning outcomes for girls — and that requires investment in pedagogy, teaching and learning materials, teaching aids, well equipped classrooms, books. That is what the extra budget needs to go on.”

— Rasheda Choudhury,  
Director, CAMPE

### Quality Educators Matter

Many low-income country governments have struggled to expand the teaching force at the pace and scale needed to cope with increased demand for primary school places since 2000. A common response has been to bring untrained men and women into the profession, offering anything from a few weeks to several months training. This has given rise to growing concern about the impact on the quality of teaching and learning offered, and the conditions of the teachers (UNESCO 2010). **Quality Educators For All**, a joint project of OxfamNovib and global federation of teachers' unions Education International (EI), is working to develop tools and partnerships to assist governments to upgrade the qualifications of such teaching, initially working in Mali and Uganda and paying particular attention to the gendered aspects of the issue. The project aims are:

- To develop and/or enhance a gender-just teachers' competency profile based on a national consensus, as well as contemporary curriculum needed to teach life skills.
- To expand the provision of high-quality, in-service and initial education for primarily un(der)qualified teachers, drawing on innovative practices in formal and non-formal settings, with particular attention to gender balance in the profession.
- To advocate that national and international institutions incorporate successful approaches developed in the project into education sector policies.

Kenya is a 'weak performer' in the Availability Table, as a result of its poor record on girls' NER and tertiary representation, combined with poor data submission. However, the Kenyan government has a specific policy that states the need to 'pay special attention [in policy planning] to factors that enhance gender parity, for example, gender balance at school management level' (MoEST 2004). This exists in conjunction with a Presidential Directive issued in 2006 which sets a 30% quota for women in public sector managerial positions, including head teachers, across the country.

Despite the existence of appropriate policies, there is a lack of implementation strategy and this means that the targets are routinely

missed (Chisikwa 2010). The low numbers of women in school management can be attributed to a variety of factors. First is the fact that local politicians favour men when recruiting head teachers. Second is the influence of tradition, where the status quo is maintained because the schools had never previously had a female head teacher. Third is the widespread reluctance of husbands to allow their wives to take up positions of authority within schools (Chisikwa 2010). These trends are confirmed by additional research demonstrating that cultural beliefs and domestic responsibilities are significant factors in hindering rural female teachers from engaging in the kind of professional development activities and training courses that would enable them to make progress into management roles within schools (Omukaga et al. 2007).

The disparity continues through into tertiary education: in Ethiopia, fewer than 1 in 10 tertiary level teachers are female and in Bangladesh less than 1 in 5. The absence of women teachers from the tertiary level is perpetuated and exacerbated by the systemic lack of opportunities for girls and women to access required skills and training (UNESCO 2006).

Although ensuring that there are sufficient female teachers is a strong strategy for improving the acceptability of education for girls, it should not be pursued without due attention to wider issues of gender equality within the teaching profession. In other parts of the world, notably Latin America, North America and Europe, women teachers pre-dominate especially in pre-primary and primary education. One reason for this phenomenon is that taking care of younger children is traditionally seen as an extension of motherhood and therefore a 'natural' job for women. As research shows, the more feminized an occupation is, the more likely it is that its employees will be paid poorly (Drudy, 2008). Correspondingly, in these contexts higher-status jobs in teaching such as head teachers and school managers are held disproportionately by men, even though they are under-represented in the profession as a whole in these regions.

**It is clear that a strategy to promote equality in training, recruitment and staffing is vital at all levels of education, but promoting gender equality amongst teachers must also include recognition of the lived experiences of women teachers in schools, equality in potential for career progression and women's access to training and professional development.** But the challenge of ensuring that women can be inspiring teachers for both girls and boys requires "addressing policy and practice to ensure that a feminised education sector can be a high status, respected one in which adequate resources are allocated to ensure the highest professional performance of all teachers, whether they be women or men" (UNESCO 2006 p.1).

### Engendering pedagogy: helping girls to learn

Poor quality education disproportionately affects girls, who will struggle to leave school with the cognitive and non-

cognitive skills to live healthy, productive lives. The global learning crisis is magnified for girls in low-income countries, with many leaving school even after four or five years unable to read a simple sentence. Educational attainment for girls is compounded not only by barriers which keep girls out of the classroom, but also by gender inequities in the classroom. Efforts to make education increasingly acceptable to girls are enhanced by eliminating gender bias from textbooks and learning materials (UNICEF 2004), ensuring that the curriculum is relevant to girls (ActionAid 2011) and training teachers to enable them to eliminate gender bias in classroom practice. Alongside issues of participation and access, ensuring that there is a girl-friendly curriculum and that textbooks portray positive images of women and girls are vital aspects within promoting girl-friendly schools (UNGEI 2010b). One simple measure to ensure that any new curriculum and teaching and learning materials are more gender equitable is to include equal numbers of pictures of women and men, engaging in similar tasks, including examples of women being role models or 'heroes' for girls and boys in every area of society — not restricted to traditional gender stereotypes. In countries where the role of women is to be subservient, unquestioning, quiet and therefore 'respectful' the very act of being a student requires challenging powerful socialization into gendered roles. It is crucial that efforts be made to ensure that girls are proactively encouraged to participate in learning processes, from the teaching practices to the learning supports. In order to track these, sex-disaggregated data on student performance should be systematically collected to provide data which will allow teachers and school administrators to increase focus on gendered disparities in learning and correct course.

In considering curriculum development, it is also important to take into account the needs and expectations of working children and their parents. Quite often, parents will not send their girls and boys to school because they do not see the relevance of what they learn measured against what they can earn outside of school. This implies a process of educating parents on the value of education and relevance of education

to the realities of the community. In some ILO projects, this has involved what is called 'pre-vocational training', where children are introduced to vocational training as part of the curriculum to help them learn skills, consider what they would like to do after school, and make informed decisions based on what they learn in school (ILO 2002).

Broad consensus has emerged that provision of sexual and reproductive health has the potential to provide empowering and transformative learning experiences for girls (WHO 2002). Nevertheless, provision of sexual and reproductive health services within the school system is largely undocumented and likely to be very rare, given parental and community sensitivities (Center for Global Development 2008). Evidence suggests that skills-based — as opposed to knowledge-based — programs have the most impact. OxfamNovib has supported a number of initiatives aiming to introduce sexual and reproductive health issues into the curriculum and classroom practice, for example through its support to UNSEEM (Uganda Network for Sexuality Education Mainstreaming), a partnership of six Ugandan organizations.

**In Bangladesh**, whilst both girls and boys are affected by poor quality education, there are certain ways that girls are particularly affected. Foremost amongst these is the fact that they receive unequal treatment in the classroom, are taught using biased curriculum and are victims of sexist subject streaming — being pushed towards the humanities (ADB 2010). Poor quality curriculum is recognized as a significant weakness that needs addressing (World Bank 2008). In the new PEDP III plan (see details in the Bangladesh case study) there is a major revision of the curriculum planned in order

to make it more responsive to gender. New materials are being produced but the challenge is to integrate them fully into classroom practice. This is dependent upon training trainers, both in regard to gender-sensitive curriculum design, and gender sensitive classroom practices, so that teachers can learn how to make the transition and make practical use of the new approaches .

Large class sizes, placement of students in the classroom and teacher attention to students have major impacts on whether girls who have accessed education are able to participate in learning. In Bangladesh, for example, the non-governmental organization CAMPE has recommended that classroom layout be regularly altered so that the students move seats and more of them stay engaged in the learning process. **Teacher training in gender-sensitive teaching practice can help to ensure that teachers employ techniques to ensure equal interactive time with boys and girls, encourage female students' participation in class, address gender discrimination among students and nurture a safe and positive learning environment for girls as well as boys.**

### **Girls must be protected from violence and abuse**

Gender-based violence permeates societies, undermining girls and women. In this report the focus is on the implications of gender-based violence for education, but it should be recognized that a girl's right to freedom from the imposition of power and violent abuse extends beyond education and into all aspects of life. Gender-based violence and abuse are outward manifestation of deeper systemic injustice against women relating to patriarchal power, unequal representation and unequal

"Education for girls is very important — when an educated girl grows up she can build her family as she wants to. If I was not educated then I would be cheated out of my rights, my rights to my inherited property, but being educated I know my rights, I am empowered. The curriculum is an important part of this — here in Bangladesh the curriculum should focus more on rights for women regarding property, life skills for women and girls, realistic life lessons"

— Shadya Sahanarca, teacher in Ambagicha Government Primary School, Bangladesh

## **In Focus ⇒ DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

There is a need to recognize more fully the grave implications of sexual violence for education in conflict-affected countries (GMR 2011). In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), millions have died and millions have been subjected to sexual abuse in the bloodiest war since World War II. Across the nation there is a stark lack of basic schooling, with only 17% of people having more than a primary education (USAID 2011). The issues of education and gender-based violence are closely interrelated, and schools are routinely targeted and destroyed during attacks on villages (GMR 2011). Unsurprisingly DRC is classed as 'Failing' within the Availability Table for girls' education. Conflict makes

girls particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence, and is a context in which their rights are regularly violated. Sexual violence against women has been illegal in the DRC since 2006, but enforcing this is incredibly difficult due at least in part to the fact that the police and the army are often major perpetrators of the crimes. ActionAid has undertaken ground-breaking work in close partnership with police and military, to disseminate information about the laws protecting women and girls, and beginning the journey towards effective enforcement (ActionAid 2011).

distribution of wealth. All of these must be tackled in order that the rights of women and girls are fully realized — in education and beyond (Mudekunye 2011). The right to acceptable education entails ensuring that education functions to protect girls rather than making them susceptible to abuse.

There is clear evidence that giving girls an education is the most effective means by which to protect them and enables them to resist violence and abuse (Sen 1999). Girls who go to school have higher self-esteem and are less likely to suffer violence and be vulnerable to exploitation (UNICEF 2005). However, although education protects girls, this is not always the case and tragically schools can be a site of abuse against girls. If a school is thought to be a site of physical or sexual violence then parents will be reluctant to send children to school, and students will be reluctant to attend (Hayward 2003, Jones and Espey 2008).

Violence, and the fear of violence, is an important reason for girls not to attend school in Tanzania. There is limited research on actual levels of sexual violence against girls within the country. However, within the sample of one survey, half of primary school girls reported having had sexual intercourse with adults, including teachers, and 40% of those reported that the sex had been forced. The majority of cases of sexual violence go unreported. A culture of patriarchy often condones sexual violence and leaves many girls feeling such violence is inevitable and that they are powerless to prevent it (Matasha et al. 1998).

According to the Tanzanian Sexual Offences Special Provisions Act (1998), any act of ‘gross indecency’ between a teacher and pupil in primary or secondary school is a criminal offence irrespective of age (s138A). In failing to protect girls in schools, the Tanzanian government is failing to uphold national law and protect rights established in the National Constitution (art. 9, 29 particularly). It is furthermore failing to fulfil obligations under several international treaties (ACRWC art. 16, 27, CEDAW, CRC art. 19, 34). Although Tanzania is a high-performing country on availability, its practice in this regard

leaves it falling short of desired standards of acceptability.

Making education acceptable is therefore dependent on ensuring that safety is enjoyed at school, and on the journey to and from it. A review of best practices by UNICEF, USAID and Plan International found that gender-based violence in, to and from school can be reduced by investing in interventions under the broad areas of: **Awareness of Violence** (national legislation, monitoring and enforcement, legal access for reporting and codes of conduct), **Infrastructure Reform** (safe latrines, recreational spaces, lighting and fences, and more schools), **Stakeholder Involvement** (reform of teacher training, increased school transport and accompaniment, peer to peer education and parent committee training), **Curriculum Reform** (reducing stereotypes, life-skills-based sexuality education and sex health rights content), and **School Personnel** (more female teachers, violence counselors) (Global AIDS Alliance, 2007). Alongside this, acceptable education requires the prevalent culture and practice of impunity for many who sexually abuse students to be challenged. This requires sustained campaigning to enforce the legal infrastructure surrounding education: ensuring that perpetrators are punished.

Community awareness programs have also been shown to play a vital part. In Bangladesh, ‘eve teasing’ is an often brutal form of sexual harassment that can result in permanent physical and psychological damage and profoundly alter the course of a girl’s life. The harassment manifests itself in different ways, ranging from verbal abuse and sexual innuendo to abduction, acid-throwing and rape. In response, parents choose to keep their daughters at home rather than send them to school, or they marry girls off at an early age in an attempt to protect their honour and safety. To combat this phenomenon, the Department of Women and Children Affairs has worked with UNICEF and civil society organizations to launch ‘Kishori’ clubs, to provide a safe environment where girls and boys can come together and socialize in positive ways. Club members participate in a variety of activities and information sessions

## **In Focus ⇒ VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS IN ECUADOR**

Ecuador is a ‘strong performer’ in the Availability Table due to strong GPI for NER, and equal school life expectancy for girls and boys. However, there remain significant ongoing educational challenges. The UN Committee against Torture (2010) exposed the concerning issue of school-based violence against girls in Ecuador.

*‘The Committee expresses its deepest concern about the numerous and consistent reports received describing the scale of the problem of abuse and sexual violence against minors in educational establishments in Ecuador ... there has not yet been an adequate institutional response by the State party, and that this is one reason why victims frequently prefer not to report instances of abuse ... The Committee is particularly concerned about the information on cases in which the victims have allegedly identified their aggressor among the teaching staff.’*

There is also a high level of anecdotal evidence regarding the pervasive nature of sexual violence in schools. Newspapers report that sexual violence is widespread in educational establishments, with numerous cases brought against teachers. This is combined with a worrying reluctance to report instances of sexual violence in schools, with a ‘culture of silence’ surrounding the issue — and in the rare cases when victims do report abuse, school authorities often fail to take appropriate action.

There is urgent need to tackle the lack of implementation of laws to protect girls from violence within school. The government has taken steps to address this, launching two national initiatives in 2009 — however these too have been criticized on the basis of their lack of effective implementation strategies (UN Committee against Torture 2010).



and are empowered to become agents of change. There are now close to 3,000 Kishori Clubs operating in nearly 30 districts across Bangladesh, and in a UNICEF study of the clubs, all of

the young people surveyed had spoken about a key issue to their parents and/or community leaders — up from 70% just two years previously (UNICEF 2009).

### **RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING ACCEPTABILITY OF EDUCATION**

- Governments should adopt recruitment, training and postings policies to ensure that women teachers are equally represented at all levels of education and in rural as well as urban areas.
- Governments must respect and protect women teachers' rights by addressing discrimination within the teaching profession, which pushes women teachers to lower-paid, lower-status jobs and postings.
- There must be no impunity for perpetrators of violence and sexual abuse against girls, whether in conflict or non-conflict situations; perpetrators must be held to legal account for their violations.
- Governments should initiate awareness-raising programs for school staff and communities and ensure that girls know where to go to report violations of their right to safety in and around school.
- Curricula and teaching and learning processes must reject gender stereotypes and be geared towards creating new gender norms and social practices that encourage girls' full participation in education and eventually in all aspects of cultural, political and professional life.
- Teachers must be trained and supported to use new approaches, and learning assessments must be sensitive to engendered outcomes.

# 7

## ADAPTABILITY OF EDUCATION

### STRUCTURING EDUCATION SO THAT IT IS ADAPTABLE AND RESPONSIVE TO THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF GIRLS AND BOYS

“We want to ensure that education can be adaptable, that girls who are in early marriages can come back to school, if we give them second opportunities then married girls will come back. It is not illegal but the social stigma attached to going back to school — that needs to change. The non formal sector is the key because here the girls will not feel so sensitive about being older than the other girls in the class. We need to make education adaptable.”

— Tasneem Athar,  
Deputy Director, CAMPE

The **adaptability** aspect of the right to education applies to the ability of the educational system to respond to the needs and abilities of students, adapt to different contexts and meet the best interests of the child. There are multiple indicators that can be utilized to reflect the adaptability of schooling. For the purpose of this report, the focus is on the implications of child labor, child marriage and early pregnancy.

#### Child labor as an obstacle to education

As highlighted in the section above on stipends and demand-side incentives, household poverty drives families to put their children — especially girls — to work. This can involve domestic chores such as cooking and cleaning, working in fields or looking after animals. When parents become sick and unable to work, for example because of HIV/AIDS, the burden of family work falls on children. As a result, many children, particularly girls, have to drop out of school early and take on responsibilities such as preparing food and caring for younger siblings. In poor households where the burden of family care falls on the mother’s shoulders, a girl’s value at home may be perceived as greater than at school. Unsurprisingly, coming from a wealthier household increases the chance of a girl staying in school — the primary reason being that there is less need for them to give domestic assistance at home or engage in income-generating activity (Muhammed and Eskander 2005).

There are many reasons why children work and lack of access to good quality, compulsory, free public education is one of them, while the most significant is household poverty. Ensuring family survival pushes parents to send their children to work rather than to school. Their labors might not always be in the form of paid employment, but, particularly in the case of girls, can involve domestic chores such as cooking and cleaning, working

in fields or looking after animals. Another factor pushing children out of school and into work is related to parents’ own educational experiences, or lack of them. For example, parents who were denied an education themselves may not see the value in it for their own children, preferring to send them out to work.

In other situations, when parents become sick and unable to work, for example because of HIV/AIDS, children are forced to assume the burden of being the family bread winner. As a result, many children, particularly girls, have to drop out of school early and take on responsibilities such as caring for younger siblings. In poor households where the burden of family care falls on the mother’s shoulders, a girl’s value at home may be perceived as greater than at school. Unsurprisingly, coming from a wealthier household increases the chance of a girl staying in school — the primary reason being that there is less need for them to give domestic assistance at home or engage in income generating activity (Muhammed and Eskander 2005).

Education is pivotal in global efforts to eliminate child labor, establishing a skilled workforce and promoting development based on the principles of social justice and human rights. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has acquired significant experience in using education as a principal means of addressing child labor. Interventions include a broad range of activities such as non-formal education opportunities, mainstreaming former child laborers into the formal education system and building national alliances to make education policies and systems more responsive to children at risk. Therefore, efforts to achieve Education For All and the progressive elimination of child labor are inextricably linked. On the one hand, education is a key tool in preventing child labor. Children with no access to education have little alternative but to enter the labor

market where they are often forced to work in dangerous and exploitative conditions. On the other hand, child labor is a major obstacle to the achievement of Education For All, since children who are working full time cannot go to school. For those who combine work and school, their educational achievement will suffer and there is a strong tendency for them to drop out of school to go into full-time employment.

Investments in education need to focus more on children at risk, particularly girls, and initiatives need to offset the opportunity cost for very poor families. Clearly, for education to play its part in the elimination of child labor, problems in education systems need to be addressed. This means focusing on the 4A categories, improving the quality of education and directing resources to increasing access to schooling for all children while ensuring that the school environment, particularly the learning environment, is inclusive and strong enough to persuade children to remain in school. The learning environment itself requires significant attention and it is vital that the parents of out-of-school children, especially girls, are convinced of the advantages of education in improving their situation and helping them to break out of the poverty cycle. Interventions, therefore, must be accompanied by measures to alleviate poverty and offset the loss of income engendered by children going to school instead of to work.

Education for all children and the establishment of a properly resourced, accessible, public and quality education system in every country worldwide is an ideal to which the international community has aspired for many years and which coalesced into the global EFA initiative. If the aims and objectives of EFA could be achieved, then children would not need to work to support themselves and their families. Girls would enjoy the same educational opportunities as boys. Decent work opportunities would grow exponentially. Children, young people, and previously uneducated communities would have a better understanding of their rights in society and in the workplace. However, this ideal has yet to be reached and the impact of the global economic crisis and soaring food prices has increased the vulnerability of children to situations of child labor.

The true sense of the right to education involves the opportunity for children to learn without having to overcome obstacles that may prevent this, such as child labor. In this

sense, the focus remains on advocating for the full implementation of relevant international instruments, in particular ILO Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Age of Employment and its clear definitions of 'light work', ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, the reality of widespread poverty and the inability of some governments to enforce legislation means that some flexibility may have to be applied in certain situations — fighting against the worst forms of child labor and for the progressive elimination of all forms of child labor, whilst making education provision adaptable to the circumstances of families whose survival depends on some level of income generation by their children. It is important that these flexible approaches are used as bridging solutions only, and are time-bound with established goals and deadlines to ensure that the ultimate goal of child labor elimination is achieved and all children are able to go to school. In addition, in situations where adaptable approaches are applied, it is important that some level of monitoring is included to protect children from exploitation and abuse that could lead to worst forms of child labor.

A creative approach to overcoming the educational challenges in rural and marginalized areas has been introduced in parts of Bangladesh. The objective is to create schools that are more adaptive to seasonal constraints in rural and marginalized communities, recognizing that both the harvest and the weather dictate the ability of children to attend school. In these areas, the 'Flexible School Calendar' policy means that schools are given the freedom to decide the most appropriate times for their school holidays. This accommodates the fact that children are required to help their parents during the harvest season. Ensuring that the long school holiday falls at this time serves to improve attendance and reduce dropout rates — making school adaptable to the realities of many rural communities. Similarly, this policy also enables schools in remote areas to adjust their school calendar around the monsoon season when heavy rainfall prevents children from walking to and from school.

### Overcoming child marriage

Ensuring that a girl has the opportunity to access and remain in school, and enlisting parents and the community broadly to protect this access, is the key to preventing

“If we hear about plans for early marriage we go to the house to pressure the parents not to do it. Although sometimes it still happens in secret. We discuss these things at the parent-teacher meetings and we try to educate the older girls regarding the adverse effects of early marriage. The involvement of the community is key: they must protest to prevent it!”

— Mr. Elias, Head teacher,  
Chunkutia Girls' High School

“The next big challenge in improving girls' education in our country is dealing with the poor mechanisms of follow up when there are cases of pregnancy, combined with the lack of effective re-entry policy for girls that have become pregnant.”

— Ginason Jandwa, Aide et Action  
in Tanzania

child marriage, as marriage is repeatedly found to be one of the principal reasons for female dropout or exclusion from education (Wilson 2003). Studies across the developing world conclude that women with seven or more years of schooling delay marriage for an average of five years compared to women with no schooling (World Bank 1993, Colclough and Lewin 1993, Summers 1994). In Mozambique, attending school reduces the chance of a girl being married before she is 18 from 60% down to 10% (Summers 1994). The situation is similar in Nicaragua, where going to school reduces the chance of girl being married before she is 18 from 45% down to 16% (ICRW 2007). Child marriage pushes girls out of education and, at the same time, remaining in education acts as the best means for protecting them against child marriage.

**Whilst efforts should be made to make education adaptable for the specific needs and context of girls that are already married, including flexible learning options, the ideal is to introduce schemes that dissuade against child marriage altogether.** This can be effectively facilitated by the introduction of demand-side incentives, such as the stipend schemes conditioned on delayed marriage, coupled with sensitization campaigns and broader strengthening and enforcement of family law. In Mali, the president was forced to send the *Code de la Famille* (Family Law bill) back to parliament for review after widespread opposition to the bill — which would raise the age of marriage to 18 in most cases and strengthen women’s rights in the family and to inheritances — pointing to key gaps in the legal protection of girls and women. Bangladesh, on the other hand, has outlawed marriage under the age of 18 and links the provision of stipends to postponement of marriage. Implementation of the law remains a challenge and the role of schools in creating awareness and discouraging the practice is vital .

### Young mothers have education rights

Early marriage, violence against girls and discriminatory practices mean that teenage pregnancy frequently prevents girls from completing their studies. The lack of control over their reproductive activities, sexual violence and

child marriage mean that many school-aged girls become pregnant during primary or secondary school. The lack of sexual health education and dearth of contraceptive options mean that many girls will lack the knowledge to prevent unwanted pregnancies. For example, in Mali the contraceptive prevalence among women aged 15 to 49 is just 8% while the average birth rate is seven children per woman (GenderStats). In many countries, the administrative legal regulations for schools prevent girls from attending school while pregnant or returning to school after childbirth. However, the right of the pregnant girl to an acceptable education is explicitly recognized in The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the UNCRC and ACHWR [art. 11.6] (Wilson 2003). Despite this oft-articulated right, the disconnection between law and practice means that many girls are denied access to education as soon as they become mothers.

For example, a 2002 regulation from the Tanzanian government (GN295 of 2002 Cap. 66) implicitly sanctions the expulsion of pregnant girls from school. Although attempts have been made to revise the law, the practice is still widespread and thousands of girls are forced to drop out of school each year due to pregnancy. In addition, those who are able to return to school after giving birth are often forced to attend at a different location or are unable to attend due to lack of alternative childcare. In certain circumstances, the stigma and associated bullying from pregnancy also prevents girls from coming back to school; this must be comprehensively addressed (Bernard 2002).

Governments must ensure that pre-existing laws that protect the right to education for pregnant girls and mothers are upheld and in countries where this is a systemic issue there needs to be a comprehensive program to raise awareness at the system and community level.

*Administrative laws need to be reformed to ensure that pregnancy is not grounds for expulsion or transfer from school, schedules need to be flexible to accommodate the dual responsibilities of school and childcare and stigma must be tackled inside and outside of school.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING ADAPTABILITY OF EDUCATION

- States must recognize that child marriage and child labor are violations of human rights and must therefore put in place appropriate legislation and affirmative action policies to tackle the problem.
- Law and practice regarding teenage pregnancy and child marriage should respect the right of girls to continue their education regardless of marital or parental status. This includes the abolition or reform of legal and administrative provisions preventing girls to attend school while pregnant or returning to school after childbirth.
- Governments should promulgate and enforce new and old laws aligning the minimum age for the end of compulsory education with the minimum ages for employment and marriage.
- Standardization in education provision should not preclude boys and girls from attending school. Efforts should be made to provide adaptable education to fit with working patterns as long as work is not hazardous or demeaning for children.

# BANGLADESH: CASE STUDY

## Success is in sight, but gender equality in education is not yet achieved

Bangladesh has made significant progress in the provision of girls' education over the last two decades and in the Availability Table it is recorded as a 'Strong performer'. Bangladesh has been lauded by the international community for achieving success in increasing its enrollment rates for girls and boys at the primary and secondary level. Bangladesh has also made great strides in closing its gender parity at the primary and secondary level. The net enrollment for boys was 82.9% in 2009, while in the same year it was 89.8% for girls. Bangladesh is one of few countries in the region that has achieved gender parity at enrollment for both primary and secondary and gender parity for completion at primary (BANBEIS 2008). This success can be attributed to its efforts not only to improve availability of education, but also its adoption of policies and practices — outlined below — that help to make education accessible, acceptable and adaptable. An overview of the progress made in girls' education is demonstrated in the table below with figures from 1970 to the present day (BANBEIS 2008, BANBEIS 2011).

Education progress in Bangladesh is occurring within a socio-cultural context that continues to discriminate strongly against women and girls. The severity of gender discrimination is demonstrated by the fact that Bangladesh scores extremely poorly on the Gender Empowerment Measure, ranking 108 out of 109 assessed countries (Unterhalter, North and Exley 2010). The perceived inferiority of women is deeply embedded within Bangladesh society and discrimination on the basis of gender begins at birth (Fazle Rabbi 2008, Hossain, Subrahmanian and Kabeer 2002, Ardt, Hastings, Hopkins et al. 2005). So, while girls have been able to participate in school in greater numbers due to increasing availability and accessibility of school,

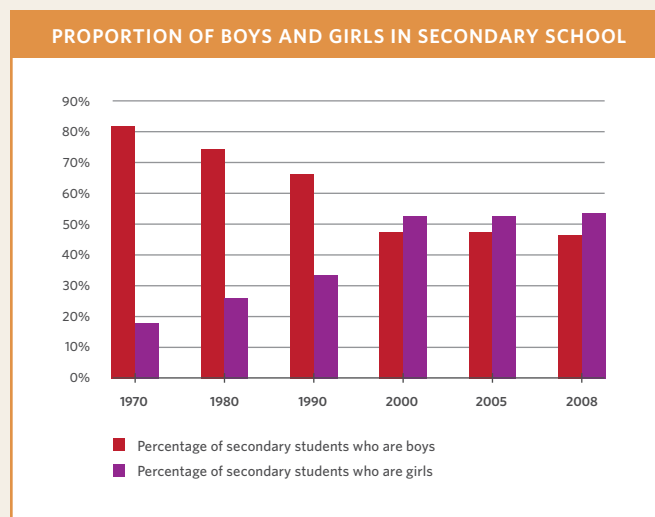


Figure 8. Ratio of girls to boys in secondary school, Bangladesh

remaining challenges to gender equality throughout the educational cycle mean that gender discrimination continues to pose serious challenges to Bangladesh's development.

Although the net enrollment rate for girls has reached 89%, challenges within the classroom are still prevalent. Whilst secondary drop-out is a major challenge for both boys and girls, it is girls that are most at risk (ADB 2010). Of those that enrol, completion rates are around 23% for boys and 17% for girls (UNDP 2008). Indeed, boys outperform girls at secondary level in every subject and in every type of school (Education Watch 2007). Another challenge is the lack of female teachers; although female teachers have been shown to be a factor in

Date	Girls NER % in primary	% of girls students enrolled in secondary (of total students)	% of female teachers at primary school level	% of female teachers at secondary school level
1970	—	18.4	2.2	7.2
1975	—	25.0	—	8.6
1980	—	26.1	6.2	10.1
1985	—	32.6	—	10.1
1990	50.76	33.9	20.9	9.7
1995	73.86	47.0	—	13.9
2000	85.83	52.6	33.8	15.1
2005	90.10	52.3	36.3	20.3
2010	94	—	41.8	23.25

Figure 7. Key education statistics, Bangladesh



“Without fixing education it is very difficult to change anything because it is the main tool to bring in analytical thinking, to question things. Education for girls means they can develop life skills and become economically independent. If we can provide good quality education then these old attitudes and old practices against girls will change everywhere.”

— Rokeya Kabir, Executive Director, Bangladesh Nari Prograti Sangha, BNPS

increasing female enrollment and retention, in Bangladesh the percentage of female teachers relative to men is still very small. According to data from the GenderStats database, the percentage of secondary female teachers has only slightly increased from 12.6% in 1998 to 19.5% in 2008. In addition, the gender disparities in tertiary education are substantial. In 2009, the gross enrollment rate for girls in tertiary education was 5.6% while that figure was at 10% for boys. In addition, the literacy rate for adult females (51%) is substantially lower than that of males (60%). Furthermore, despite being comprised of nearly 50% of the population, women only account for 41% of the labor force.

### Education sector program

The provision of basic education was dramatically improved across the nation in the 1990s with a major school expansion program. Despite economic growth averaging 5% per year for the past two decades, education spending remains at 2.3% of GDP, well below the 6% level recommended by the OECD and the Dakar Framework for Action. However, although government spending on education has stagnated in terms of proportion of national income, in real terms the economic growth means spending on education has increased. There has therefore been a 50% increase in public education spending since 1999, resulting in ‘substantial increases in per student spending in basic education’ (Al-Samarrai 2007 p.1). The dominant strategic approach to education in Bangladesh has been through a succession of sector wide approaches (Nasmeer and Tate 2007). The General Education Project (GEP) was implemented from 1990-1995, following this was the first Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-I) from 1997-2002, extended to 2004. PEDP-II ran from 2004-2009 and PEDP-III is now in formation. For the recently-completed PEDP program, the key objectives were to increase access, participation and completion rates of primary education and to improve the quality of student learning and achievement (Government of Bangladesh 2003).

### Civil society advocacy and political will

The progress seen in girls’ education over the last two decades forms part of the wider education revolution across parts of South Asia that has seen millions more girls enrolled in school (ASPBAE 2010). A vibrant

civil society gender equality movement has campaigned for a long time to ensure that the right to education is realized for girls. The role of organizations such as the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) and the Association of Women for Progress (BNPS) has been vital, networking hundreds of education charities and providing a national voice that instigates change through influencing government, donors, the media, and civil society itself. The non-governmental sector has also assisted with the development of gender-sensitive curriculum, training teachers and government workers, promoting gender responsive budgeting and implementing the existing laws that are designed to protect girls in education. In combination with this, the high commitment to girls' education that exists across all the different government parties has provided the continuity necessary to embark on systemic reform of the system.

### Demand-side incentives

The decision of the government to implement a stipend scheme that provides free secondary education for every girl in the country has proved very effective at facilitating increased access and sustained engagement in education (BANBEIS 2008). Female enrollment rates more than doubled from 442,000 in 1994 to over one million in 2001 due to stipends, increased female teachers, expanding training for teachers and school management committees, providing performance incentives to schools and students and investing in water and sanitation facilities as part of a broader World Bank-supported project to improve secondary school.

### Challenges

Although expanding school access through the comprehensive secondary stipend scheme has improved school accessibility, the hidden costs of education continue to pose problems in ensuring that education is truly accessible for the poorest girls. Significant amongst these additional costs are the cost of uniform, books, examination fees, transport costs, pens and paper (Basu and Asad 2010). In addition to these, the single most significant hidden cost of secondary education is that of private tuition. Although girls may stay enrolled throughout secondary, especially within poor families, girls become gradually marginalized as a result of not being able to access sufficient private tuition. Subsequently, girls are less likely than boys to be put forward for

Secondary School Certificate exams and if they are put forward they are less likely to pass (ADB 2010). The systemic dependence on private tuition combines with preferential investment in boys cause girls to continue to suffer discrimination in regard to secondary completion (Mansoor and Chowdhury 2005).

In addition, the education system is characterized by widespread wastage and poor quality (Education Watch 2008). The most significant challenges include the low qualification of teachers, weak management and accountability systems and poor quality curriculum (World Bank 2008). For girls, unequal treatment in the classroom, biased curricula, sexist subject streaming that pushes girls towards humanities, less access to additional tutoring, lack of toilets, insecurity and harassment all reduce the quality of their learning experience. Until school is made truly accessible by decreasing the hidden costs to girls' families, and school quality is improved to ensure that school is both adaptable and acceptable to the special circumstances of girls Bangladesh will continue to struggle to achieve true gender equality in education.

*'The keys to an effective girls' school are first of all having good teachers that take a proactive role, teacher training, good quality curriculum, a strong school management committee, and effective gender training for both male and female teachers. The first challenge facing girls in secondary school is harassment from men when the girls are walking the long distance to and from school. Then there is the fact that parents feel that it is wise for the girls to get married early so that they can be more secure, and when they get married the vast majority do not stay in school. There is a government rule against early marriage but we do not have the birth certificates to prove their age. The dowry that parents have to pay when their daughter gets married is an important factor, especially for poor parents. If their daughter gets married younger than in many cases they can avoid paying a dowry, this is because men want a younger wife: it is more glamorous. If we hear about plans for an early marriage we go to the house to pressure the parents not to do it. Although sometimes it still happens in secret. We discuss these things at the parent teacher meetings and we try to educate the older girls regarding the adverse effects of early marriage. The involvement of the community is key: they must protest to prevent it!'*

— K.M. Elias, Head teacher, Chunkutia Girls' High School

"Girls are the lowest priority, if there are 4 or 5 children in a family then investing in girls' education will be considered a waste of resources — because they will be married off and become a member of another family. The mentality is that women are a burden on the father or husband of the family, and women also don't believe in their own capacity. In the curriculum and the text books we need a major shift, we need to see role models of women taking responsibility, providing income for their family, women working in government."

— Rokeya Kabir, Executive Director, Bangladesh Nari Prograti Sangha, BNPS

"In Bangladesh, consistent political commitment across successive governments, especially with democratic political competition in the nineties, has been crucial for increasing school enrollments especially of girls."

— ASPBAE (2010 p. 28)

# 8

## ENFORCING RIGHTS: POLITICAL WILL IS KEY

### RECOGNITION OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN WIDER SOCIETY MUST BE THE BASIS OF GOVERNANCE AND BUDGETING TO REALIZE THE EDUCATION RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Gender inequalities in education are a function of gender discrimination and patriarchal social and cultural structures, which exist everywhere in the world. School is but one gendered institution among many, and the attitudes and practices that girls encounter therein often serve to reproduce, rather than undo, those in society at large. Governments, international institutions and development forums are also overwhelmingly male-dominated, perhaps explaining their tendency to overlook gender inequalities in education and instead focus on the more encouraging picture of NERs.

Addressing these kinds of deeply-entrenched values and attitudes implies that governance must be a central focus of the rights-based approach: who is accountable for the implementation of economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights? Who participates in national-level decision-making, and what are their obligations under domestic and international human rights law to promote girls' education? Who is responsible for ensuring that gender equality is prioritized in all different aspects of education including 'participation, access, quality of learning and teaching, curriculum, parental support and community collaborations' (UNGEI 2010b p.8)? While national law may protect and enshrine aspects of girls' right to education, there is a significant gap between policy and practice — and a clear need to identify those involved in governing global, national and local decisions which impact progress in girls' education.

In order to move from policy to practice, from law to law enforcement, from rhetoric to reality, one clear indicator of political will is the decisions linked to national budgets. The trade-offs in budget allocation provide a concrete marker for what governments prioritize — and what they are willing to invest their limited resources in. At the national level, gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is a practice which can engender national policies by ensuring alignment between gender equality objectives and associated public resource distribution. It is widely recognized that effective engagement with GRB can have a significant impact on the governance that can improve education for girls (Sharp 2003, Sharp 2007, UNESCO 2003, UNESCO 2010). Engagement of civil society — especially women's groups and other advocates of gender equality in education — is a necessary condition for successful GRB. Civil society participation can ensure that policy objectives are tailored to address multiple factors of discrimination and marginalization, and budget monitoring by civil society provides valuable information about the extent to which

spending reaches target groups and actually delivers gender-equitable outcomes (Ichii 2010).

There are three main interrelated goals of introducing gender-responsive budgeting in education (Sharp 2003). The first goal is to increase awareness and understanding regarding the impact that budgets and policies have on gender issues. Second is to ensure that governments are increasingly held to account for the policy commitments and ensuring education equality. The third goal is to increase and refine government budgetary allocations to promote gender equality. The key constraint encountered repeatedly is that many GRB initiatives fail to progress beyond the first of these three goals — raising awareness and understanding but going no further. It is the third goal of improving the relevant budgetary allocations and integrating GRB that requires the greatest degree of substantive and sustained change to achieve (Sharp 2007, Budlender 2009). The inherent difficulty is that budgets are dictated by economic and political priorities and integrating gender equality is rarely a government priority (Sharp 2007, UNESCO 2010).

When attempting to improve the access and quality of girls' education, consideration must be given to how specific policies impact the opportunity costs. The role of fee abolition, stipends and other demand-side incentives have been examined in Part 1, above. In order for progress to be made in girls' education, the economic environment in which families make decisions must be explicitly recognized. This wider economic context extends beyond the school system and points towards national budget practices which can mitigate the resource barriers which prevent women and girls from accessing education. The opportunity costs of education for poor families mean that often rational decisions are made to keep girls out of school, and it is the burden of these trade-offs which must be addressed through the allocation of resources for strategies to enable if families to send their daughters to school. **By employing both gender-responsive budgeting practices, including transparency and accountability to civil society groups and parliament, and addressing the gendered dimension of macroeconomic decisions, governments can proactively improve progress towards gender equality.**

The following section reviews the best and worst performers in the Availability Table to identify patterns in their macroeconomic policies which are associated with improved environments for gender equality.

The *direct and indirect costs of schooling* have the largest influence on initial decisions to enroll in school. As highlighted above, the direct costs of schooling include school fees, materials, transportation, uniforms and school meals; these all increase when public expenditure is limited by the wider economic policy environment. Examples of indirect costs include forgone wages from labor, loss of domestic assistance for the family, safety of travel to school, and access to appropriate school sanitation. The unpaid care economy is closely related to the indirect costs of schooling and therefore is affected by similar policies. Increases in education and development expenditure provide the most direct path to decreasing these opportunity and direct costs. These costs are compensated for by increased public expenditures, with the top performing countries for girls' education mitigating the direct and indirect costs of girls' education through adoption of the following policies:

- Tanzania increased development expenditure by 8% and education expenditure by 16% in the first year of its budget cycle.
- Bangladesh increased development expenditure by 28.8% and education by 86.6%, with the goal of achieving 5% of GDP.
- Ecuador increased overall expenditure by 3.1% in the first year of its budget cycle, increased capital expenditure by 13.6% and increased teacher wages by 4%.

In addition to development expenditure, policies that improve health care, improve the availability of water, increase access and efficiency of energy and provide a larger social safety net all reduce this burden and increase the likelihood of girls attending school.

Wider economic policy can also create disincentives to educating girls. *Current and future job opportunities for women* speak to the state of the unpaid care economy and the rewards of education. When current opportunities are minimal or employment in sectors dominated by women is reduced, options to generate value outside of the unpaid care economy contract and pressure to participate in it elevate. Once again, girls are often chosen as the resource for this domestic assistance. If the long-term reward is not enough to outweigh the current benefit of assisting at home or getting a job, girls will be less likely to initiate and advance their education.

The public sector wage bill and constraints on deficit spending are the policies having greatest impact on opportunity costs of this nature. Women who participate in the formal economy tend to be clustered in public positions. Wage bills that freeze or reduce wages of public employees and policies reducing deficit spending resulting in fewer resources for the public sector, decrease current and future job opportunities for women disproportionately.

- It is telling that all top and medium performers are increasing wages and/or have ascending wage bills.
- Among the weak and failing performers, only Haiti increased wages (by 8.1% first year, although the wage bill is capped at 5% of GDP); the rest are cutting wages or have descending wage bills.

*Credit availability* for women provides them with an additional resource that strengthens the family and increases the likelihood of girls attending school. Women obtaining financial resources are more likely to invest them in family well-being, including sending their children to school.

Policies that impact the credit availability of women include microfinance initiatives, the loosening of lending practice and the acceptance of multiple forms of collateral. Land rights and succession laws can also have a strong impact on credit availability as women obtain proof of land ownership which is often needed for collateral. Top performers uniformly have policies easing credit availability:

- Tanzania established a Land Act in 2003 which allows use of land as collateral.
- Bangladesh implemented a program of collateral-free loans.
- Ecuador passed a national law capping financial intermediation spreads and eliminating loan fees.

Finally the level of *economic instability* can impact the opportunity costs of education indirectly through the unpaid care economy. Economic instability makes a country more susceptible to economic shocks — during times of economic turmoil, responsibility is shifted from the state to the unpaid care economy. As cuts to public spending occur, the unpaid care economy is overburdened and girls are used as a resource to meet the needs of the community.

Having an exchange rate that is either freely floating or strongly pegged without a monetary intervention policy eliminates a country's ability to smooth sudden detrimental changes in the international economy. In addition, overreliance on an export sector makes a country more vulnerable to price shocks. This risk can be compounded when the export is a natural resource that has an intrinsically diminishing value. For example, reliance on cotton is concerning. Eventually, the spread of cotton production will reach land that is not ideal for its cultivation. As reliance on the industry forces production to stretch into this land, the return per unit diminishes.

This broad problem can help to explain the poor standing of some of the weaker performers in girls' education, each of which is characterized by one or more aspects of strong economic instability:

- Afghanistan is failing to deliver education to its girls, afflicted by both conflict and strong negative social attitudes towards females.
- Chad is over-dependent on its oil sector, which accounts for 83% of exports. While this generated a 1260% increase in revenues since 2004, the increase in education is solely 4.7%. Clearly the oil wealth flowed elsewhere.
- Haiti has long suffered from what policy makers refer to as 'democratic deficit' (absence of good governance), which results in fiscal and institutional responsibility being shifted to the general population.

# 9

## THE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS: ECONOMIC ORTHODOXY AND GENDER

The first part of this report has focused on national-level policy and practice in legislation, education system management, and budget decisions. However, the role of globalization and related paradigms and institutions has a huge — often decisive — impact on national policies, resources and priorities. National decisions are embedded within a structure of interests derived from wider global economic paradigms and international development frameworks. Policies that support these interests are promulgated enthusiastically by the international financial institutions (IFIs). The context in which governments implement education systems and deliver education services is heavily influenced not only by country-level factors, but by the economic and financial environments in which they craft their domestic budget priorities and policies.

Although domestic actors negotiate the allocation and objectives of national budgets, the international ‘Bretton Woods’ agencies — the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) — influence the economic standards and development strategies of many countries, especially low-income, through the provision of macroeconomic policy advice, technical assistance, and importantly, conditionality attached to external finance. The Bretton Woods institutions have traditionally adopted a neoliberal economic approach to development has at its core the belief that economic prosperity, efficiency and growth can be stimulated through free trade, privatization and unconstrained capital flows.

As a result of this, the Bretton Woods institutions have tended to view both ‘education’ and ‘women’ in liberal economic terms. The service provider/client concept is applied to education, wherein quality is driven by (gender-neutral) individuals’ selective choices: education is a commodity in a market of educational options and the best educational service providers will prevail through competition. Education is valued because of its rate of economic return as an investment in human capital and a strong labor force which will lead to growth in gross domestic product. In this model, the influence of differential distributions of power goes unrecognized and unaddressed. The role of women as providers of uncompensated labor, care and household management is largely absent from the balance sheets of the IFIs — and the invisible costs women pay to compensate for economic growth agendas which cut public sector services are discounted.

Whilst both institutions have made recent steps in reforming their approach, with the World Bank significantly reducing its formal conditionality in recognition of countries’ right

to determine their own development paths, and the IMF temporarily allowing greater flexibility on fiscal targets during the financial crisis, both still have a long way to go before to provide an enabling environment for developing countries to tackle poverty and inequality.

The IMF has achieved prominence as the ‘go-to’ multilateral agency for macroeconomic policy advice and funding. As such, it plays a critical role in formulating macroeconomic policies for those countries resorting to IMF loans. The IMF adheres to a specific type of monetarist orthodoxy primarily composed of low inflation, no-to-low deficit spending, high domestic interest rates and high foreign reserve requirements. Donor governments — which retain majority power at the IFI Executive Boards — and other multilaterals including the World Bank, tend to uphold the IMF’s macroeconomic expertise with donors often basing their financing on the IMF’s advice. This affords the IMF near-unilateral authority to decide which countries are deemed stable and credit-worthy. Despite evidence that the IMF has made progress in allowing greater short term flexibility in its fiscal targets to allow for increased spending on social sectors during the financial crisis (e.g. through increased tracking of ‘priority social expenditures’ through social spending floors in their Low Income Country program and a dramatic reduction in the use of sector-specific wage ceilings), growing evidence suggests that the IMF is reverting to business as usual with a sharp tightening of IMF programs since 2009 (Oxfam 2010, Van Waeyenberge et al. 2010, UNICEF 2010, Weisbrot et al. 2009). In addition to the IMF, the World Bank is one of the most significant international creditors, providing over \$100 billion in financial loans and technical assistance to client governments around the world each year. World Bank financing supports the implementation of development operations in a range of sectors such as health, agriculture, energy and infrastructure and education. At the national level the Bank negotiates with government partners the terms and content of their Poverty Reduction Strategies, Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (the projected 3 to 5 year budget), Country Assistance Strategies (the Bank’s 3 to 5 year business plan for a country) and other development policy frameworks. The influence of the Bank’s country directors varies from country to country, but the magnitude of Bank finance, the conditions attached to Bank loans, and the perceived expertise of its staff lend considerable weight to their development approach and fiscal policies. In negotiating with central ministries, including the



Ministers of Finance and Education, policy outcomes are the product of negotiated agreements involving multiple national and international actors including the IMF. The Bank's policy-based loans often require economic, financial, labor and trade reforms which are aimed at stimulating economic growth and developing private market opportunities (World Bank Annual Report 2010).

### IMF orthodoxy puts the squeeze on women and girls

#### Macroeconomic governance and gender-responsive monetary and fiscal policy

Analysis of the interaction between macroeconomic policies, gender and education reveals that education availability, accessibility and acceptability — especially for girls — are all affected by the economic policy options pursued at country level.

The IMF has a preferred set of macroeconomic policies that particularly influence the degree to which countries focus on reducing debt, or on investing in education and other public services. They also affect the economic fortunes of poor people, increasing the real and opportunity costs of sending girls and boys to school.

The policies frequently advised by the IMF in pursuit of the

goal of reducing debt are the following:

- **Keeping inflation lower than 10%** (and usually lower than 5%) requires reducing the number of government wage earners and/or paying wage earners lower wages. Since teachers usually make up by far the biggest proportion of the government payroll, this has a strong effect both on how many teachers can be hired and on pay levels. The high interest rates, which are used to keep inflation low, make it expensive for local borrowers to gain access to credit. This will impact any local credit seeker interested in education sector investment, including school building construction and education materials. Especially in the area of gender equity, access to credit is an important incentive for parents to invest in their daughters' education. If a farmer cannot get credit to support or expand production, children may be pulled from school to compensate with manual labor. If a local business owner cannot get credit to expand production and hire more local skilled labor, this lack of current and future opportunity can dissuade parents from sending their children, especially girl children, to school.
- **No-to-low deficit spending** limits the amount the government can put into the economy to finance public goods and public sector salaries. No-to-low

Country	Performance Level	Debt to GDP Ceiling (Y/N)	% Flexibility to Ceiling	Focus
Tanzania	High	Yes	69.5%	GDP
Bangladesh	High	No	—	GDP
Ecuador	High	Yes	0.0%	GDP
Sri Lanka	Medium	Yes	37.9%	GDP
Nicaragua	Medium	Yes	25.0%	Debt
Mali	Medium	Yes	8.8%	GDP
Pakistan	Weak	Yes	6.7%	GDP
Kenya	Weak	Yes	0.0%	Debt
Chad	Failing	Yes (Observed)	0.0%	Mixed
Afghanistan	Failing	Yes	0.0%	Debt
Haiti	Failing	Yes	0.0%	GDP

Figure 9. Focus of macroeconomic policies and performance on girls' education.

deficit spending tends to reduce social investments as governments do not typically measure the long term benefit of running a small deficit to invest in education and health. Low deficit targets are sometimes reinforced by wage bill ceilings, which impose limits specifically on allocations for wages for public employees, but low deficit targets alone have the broader effect of reducing the entire public budget envelope.

- The **inflation and deficit policies combined** result in fewer or less well financed public services and public sector workers. As teachers make up the largest percentage of public sector workers, wage bill ceilings and low deficit targets hit teachers and the education sector especially hard.
- The **high foreign reserves requirement** forces governments to store foreign currency in the Central Bank in order to reassure creditors — including the IMF — that the state has on hand the money to pay back loans. This reduces the amount available for investment in all systems, including education. The IMF's Internal Evaluation Office found that countries failing to meet the IMF's 5% inflation target were disciplined with higher reserve rates and as much as 85% of each dollar of ODA funds targeted for social spending ended up in Central Bank vaults (IMF 2007).

To assess the impact of IMF-advised macroeconomic policies on girls' education, the lending programs and/or Article IV surveillance documents for high, middle and low performing countries (from the Availability Table) were reviewed in 11 countries. In reviewing IMF documents two aspects that bear upon a country's success in girls' education were identified:

1. Whether countries focus on reducing debt or on increasing public sector spending: countries that focus on reducing debt tend to halt expenditure, cap wage bills and increase their reserve holdings. Countries that focus on GDP work on revenue producing policies and expand their spending in key development areas.

2. The degree of flexibility countries exercise in regard to their debt to GDP ratio:<sup>4</sup> when insisting on a low debt to GDP ratio, the IMF adds a further constraint to government spending for development, including education sector budgets.<sup>5</sup> By putting a limit on the amount of debt allowed, the IMF limits the freedom of countries to increase spending above the debt ceiling. Countries with greater **flexibility** have more room to increase their expenditure on education, development and public sector wages and should therefore be more highly correlated with better performance. Although all countries in the sample (except Bangladesh) operate with a specific debt-to-GDP ratio target, their flexibility (choice making and allocation range) and focus (reducing debt or increasing GDP) inform the differing policies they pursue and the flexibility they have to pursue them.

**A clear pattern emerges showing that those countries focused on GDP and increasing necessary investment in education are among those which are most improving in girls' education while those focused on debt tend to stagnate.**

Clear conclusions can be drawn from the analysis undertaken:

- **The rhetoric and framework of an agreement impact its effect.** High performing Tanzania dismissed the traditional three year IMF agreement and insisted on a five year plan, which provided more time to implement and measure social programs that have a longer rate of return. Countries can also broaden their definition of poverty and recognize that economic growth is not synonymous with poverty reduction. For example, Bangladesh recognizes that economic poverty may not include health, social or psychological poverty. The IMF should extend the time horizon used in macroeconomic planning and develop indicators more nuanced than GDP which account for the value to the stability of the economy as a whole of investments in health, social and psychological services.
- **Greater flexibility is essential for national development.** Flexibility in spending allows a country to target its national priorities. In the present study, medium and high performing countries had an average

<sup>4</sup> Flexibility (amount of spending allowed before reaching a debt ceiling) was calculated by subtracting the pre-IMF agreement debt to GDP ratio from the imposed ceiling and calculating its percentage.

<sup>5</sup> Debt to export ratio was used when Debt to GDP was unavailable.

flexibility to their Debt to GDP ceiling of 28.2%. In contrast, five out of six weak or failing countries had no flexibility. The ability of the government to manoeuvre in policy space is also important for economic stability. For example, countries need to be able to protect themselves from large economic shock by adjusting their exchange rate and implementing capital controls. The IMF should adapt macroeconomic advice and policies accordingly, with emphasis on situation-specific variation, reality-responsive policies and avoid a template approach.

- **Stringent wage bill ceilings should be avoided.** Wage bill ceilings disproportionately reduce the job opportunities available to women and increase the opportunity cost of education. All observable wage bills in medium and high performing countries increased while three of the four observed in weak or failing countries were either maintained or decreased. In 2007, the IMF pledged to cease the widespread application of wage bill ceilings in its agreements and to date, attributes their implementation to client governments' choices. In the case that a client government requests to reduce a wage bill, the IMF should ensure current and future impacts on the female population are well understood by that government when dispensing macroeconomic policy advice, especially by employing gender-responsive budgeting practices.
- **Creative policy innovations increase credit opportunities for women.** The three high performing

countries all implemented policies that increased access to credit for women. Ecuador eliminated loan fees and reduced their deposit to lending spread. Bangladesh implemented collateral-free loans and Tanzania encouraged lending to 'higher risk' borrowers in priority sectors through the Development Finance Guarantee Facility that guaranteed repayment of up to 50% of the loan. The IMF should ensure countries are made aware of these benefits and provide macroeconomic models to accommodate them when consulting with governments

- **Social and political context are important determinants to performance.** It is important to recognize that the economy does not operate in a vacuum. Policy effectiveness is largely influenced by the context in which it is implemented. Unstable national situations reduce the correlation that can be drawn between the policy and the outcome. The context of numerous countries in the given sample reminds us that economy may not be the sole factor driving the results. The 2005 tsunami in Sri Lanka, the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, the 2006 election in Nicaragua and the political unrest in Haiti and Afghanistan all have a powerful impact on national economies. The IMF should develop dynamic models that enable rapid spring-back in cases in which either aggregate supply or demand is suddenly devastated by political or natural events, and should train governments to understand and prepare to implement these models in a preventative manner, i.e. before disasters strike.

## IMF RECOMMENDATIONS

This analysis shows that the countries with the greatest improvement in girls' education have implemented a series of similar reforms. Based on this, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and national Ministries of Finance should implement the following macroeconomic reforms:

- The IMF and Ministries of Finance should provide greater flexibility in macroeconomic planning by allowing the use of extended time horizons and more flexible fiscal and monetary measures. Countries should be allowed to implement alternative scenarios which enable governments to make long-term investments in the social sectors, and recognizing that increased investments in health, education, social and psychological services contribute to economic 'stability'.
- The IMF and Ministries of Finance should adopt macroeconomic advice and policies which afford countries the greatest amount of flexibility ('fiscal space') for spending, including through adjusting exchange rates and capital controls to shore up social protection services in cases of external shocks, emphasizing situation-specific variation, reality-responsive policies and avoiding a template approach.
- The IMF and Ministries of Finance should avoid placing arbitrary ceilings on wage bills and ensure that their assessment of teacher need and overall expenditure on education takes into consideration current levels of female education and measures required to ensure girls attend and succeed in school.
- The IMF and Ministries of Finance should generate and implement macroeconomic models which increase credit opportunities for women.
- The IMF and Ministries of Finance should develop, as a preventative measure, dynamic macroeconomic models which enable rapid spring-back in cases in which national economies are suddenly devastated by political or natural events.
- The IMF and Ministries of Finance should ensure the opportunity costs impacting upon girls education — the direct and indirect costs of schooling, the overburdened unpaid care economy (especially in times of instability), current and future livelihood opportunities for women and credit availability to women — are all included in macroeconomic modelling, advice and policy making.

## World Bank policy and practice: making equity central

Given the influence of the World Bank on national policies to stimulate development and the impact of these policies on women in client countries, gender advocates have long targeted the Bank to improve its approach to gender. Due in large part to the efforts of a dedicated group of gender advocates, there has been substantial progress in improving its consideration of women in development. Yet — despite strong gender research, multiple gender strategies and operational policies, and much rhetoric about gender equality — the World Bank has been widely criticized for failing to translate their statements, strategies and policies into tangible reform in their investments and policy conditions (Weaver 2008, World Bank 2010a, Zuckerman 2009, World Bank 2005a). Further cause for concern stems from the lack of consistent measures to engender the Bank's education development, which continues to rely on quasi-market strategies to expand the provision of education (Lincove 2006) and which is currently moving decidedly away from the Education For All agenda (World Bank 2011c). The continuing weaknesses in the Bank's current gender policy and education operations may not translate into tangible benefits for the poorest women and girls around the world unless the Bank takes concrete steps to systematically ensure protection of their rights in education.

In 2001, the Bank launched its **Gender Strategy for Action** to operationalise gender mainstreaming throughout the Bank's procedures, which stipulated that the Bank should support a gender audit using a Country Gender Assessment (CGA) for every client country. It also aimed to ensure that the Bank's three-year business plan (Country Assistance Strategy or CAS) integrated gender concerns into its development strategies — including through the identification of priority sectors where gender integration was weak.

However, according to a 2010 review by the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group on the Gender and Development strategy of the Bank, its impact on the operational design of education projects appears to have been limited by four factors:

- The requirement to conduct a gender audit did not apply uniformly to all client countries because the Bank's operational policies do not apply to its policy-based lending. Currently, over half of all Bank lending is not subject to the directives of the gender policy.
- Gender auditing was not conducted by all client countries (only in 49 out of 93), especially in the regions with the worst rates of gender inequality and when conducted did not consistently or strongly link to CASs.
- The Bank failed to implement a results framework for the gender strategy and therefore could not determine the impact of WB operations on gender equality.
- The assumption that gender norms were already enjoying success in 'soft' sectors such as health and education lead to a decision to focus gender auditing on 'core' economic areas of the Bank (finance, infrastructure, agriculture) (World Bank 2010a).

Further attempts to promote gender integration in the Bank's operations, through the 'Gender Action Plan: Gender Equality as Smart Economics' strategy and new 'Roadmap for Gender' similarly fail to address the wider power relations in which gender is embedded and focus overly on the economic instrumentality of women (World Bank 2007, World Bank 2010a). The Bank's inconsistent application of gender safeguards to their education operations, particularly given that the Bank's gender policy does not apply to development policy operations nor to the new Program for Results (Alexander, 2011) means that gender gaps may continue to be overlooked despite the new policies and action plans.

Although several weaknesses were found in the Bank's implementation of its gender policy, the education sector has long been considered, alongside the human nutrition and population sectors, to have high levels of gender integration into its programs and has therefore featured very little in the Bank's gender strategy and related policies. According to the Bank's website, between 1990 and 2009, 100 operations included interventions specifically aimed at improving girls' education outcomes, with the Bank having invested \$185 million for several projects designed to enhance girls' access to secondary education between 1993 and 2009 (World Bank 2011a). Compared with Bank-wide operations, education projects had significantly more consideration of gender issues, and projects such as the Second Female Secondary Assistance project in Bangladesh (2002–2008) made large strides in improving girls' access to secondary school through teacher training, incentive awards for school performance and improvement, providing stipends and tuition for girls and supporting school management (World Bank 2008). Where the Bank sets equity objectives, it is likely to achieve them and several programs in girls' education have had tangible and positive results for girls (World Bank 2011b).

However, the education sector continues to face challenges to improving gender equality in and through education. First, the Bank relies heavily on market-based approaches to improve educational efficiency, which are not consistently designed to ensure that vulnerable groups, including girls, are benefiting from education investments. By promoting privatization and decentralization as core strategies to expand education, the Bank risks exacerbating gender inequities in accessing education in situations where girls' expressed demand for education is low. Secondly, the inconsistent application of gender safeguards, decreasing number of projects with gender equity objectives and insufficient use of demand-side support for girls' education in countries where gender disparities remain severe. Finally, the Bank's new education strategy poses new challenges to the integration of gender in Bank-supported projects, and will further complicate efforts to ensure that girls from the most deprived backgrounds are not left behind between 2010 and 2020.

## Looking back: Structural adjustment policies (SAPs) and women

IMF and World Bank structural adjustment policies imposed in the 1980s had a negative impact on girls' education. Structural adjustment programs were implemented as financing conditioned on economic reforms to reduce fiscal imbalances in borrowing countries.

Evidence from SAPs shows that neoliberal macroeconomic policies result in reduced investments in education for girls and cuts in social services which disproportionately impact girls' educational opportunities (Lincove 2009). Because women are the 'shock absorbers' for economic instability and reductions in public spending, the unpaid care economy compensates for fluctuating income security.

SAPs reduced the size and role of government, agricultural subsidies, the value of currency, and increased privatization of many social and economic sectors, disproportionately impacting women and girls. Large decreases in education expenditures, decreased household income, and increased reliance on child labor were associated with

SAPs, which also were correlated with increasing rates of drop-out, particularly for girls. The increased subsistence and domestic burden on women — including changes in income, prices, public services, labor conditions — translated into a disproportionate impact on educational opportunities for women and girls (Stromquist 1999).

SAPs also had important implications for public sector employees, who were targeted for layoff in accordance with the effort to favour private sector dominance. As teachers make up the largest single segment of public sector employees, the policies promoted by the neoliberal model are particularly hostile to professional teacher workforces, which have been decimated throughout the developing countries where these policies have been implemented (GCE 2009). It is critical to understand how current efforts to provide quality education — which necessitates a well-trained, well-remunerated and sufficiently numerous teaching force — are taking place in this context of teacher workforces having been decimated in the 1980s.

### Neoliberal education reform: privatization and decentralization

While the Bank has focused on the availability of education through their efforts to increase primary enrollment rates, their treatment of issues surrounding the *accessibility*, *adaptability* and *acceptability* of education has been heavily influenced by the policy trade-offs inherent in calculations of education's impact on economic growth and the rate of return in terms of human capital. As a financial institution, the Bank has historically defined education not as a human right, but as an instrumental investment in the human capital necessary for economic development. As such, "rate of return studies treat educated people as valuable only through their higher earning and greater tax revenues extracted by society." (Heyneman 2003). In the 1990s, the Bank began promoting education for the 'knowledge economy', while turning to decentralization and privatization as strategies to increase the efficiency of their education sector investments and improve quality through quasi-market reforms (Godolphin 2010). This ignores evidence that relying on markets to distribute education may reinforce pre-existing inequalities in resources and capabilities (Lincove 2009). In fact critics of neoliberal education policy have often argued that the costs to social mobility and equity outweigh the benefits of efficiency — when schools are rewarded for delivering education at the lowest costs, there are weak incentives to provide quality education for students who are more costly to educate. Therefore, it is imperative that education reform strategies which rely on privatization and decentralization must be combined with incentives to promote equity (Lincove 2009).

**Privatization** denotes a transfer of financing, management, service delivery and ownership of education facilities and

other assets, from public to private or non-governmental hands. It may take the form of private operation of public schools, private sector supply of inputs, education vouchers and scholarships and the delivery of education by private sector providers (World Bank IFC, 2011). The era of structural adjustment saw explicit Bank support for privatization and cost-sharing in education (Alexander 2001). Support for private sector expansion, cited as a necessary measure due to the limited ability of governments to scale up provision of education, has continued as a mainstay of Bank education programs today as evidenced by strong investment in private education projects by the International Finance Corporation<sup>6</sup> and the Bank's recent reference to the private sector as an integral part of a whole education system in their *Learning for All Strategy* (World Bank, 2011c). The Bank has argued for support of public-private partnerships (PPPs) which are said to provide more competitive and flexible forms of education provision, ultimately benefiting parents and families. In theory, cost savings can allow for expansion of school systems. However, advocates have critiqued this view, pointing to evidence that the private sector is poorly suited to guarantee accountability, equity and scale in education (Alexander 2001, Oxfam 2006).

For example, a post-primary operation in Burkina Faso succeeded in increasing girls' transition to secondary from 35% to 40.2% between 1997 and 2003 due to the reduction of school fees and construction of additional secondary schools. However, one of the objectives of the Bank's secondary school project was to increase the number of children enrolled in private schools, achieved by subsidizing private operators who then levy charges 7 to 12 times higher than government schools (World Bank 2005c). With only a partial offset of these fees through scholarships, World Bank investments in private

<sup>6</sup> IFC Education Company clients include: SocketWorks, Nigeria; Ghana Schools (The Trust Bank); Kenya Schools (K-Rep Bank); SABIS® International School, Lebanon; Institute of Business Management, Pakistan; YUCE School, Turkey; DuocUC, Chile; Universidad Diego Portales, Chile; Universidad de San Martín de Porres (USMP), Peru; Banco Real, Brazil; Fundo de Educação para o Brasil (FEBR), Brazil; Finem, Mexico (Financiera Educativa de Mexico); UNITEC, Mexico (Universidad Tecnológica de Mexico); Sampoerna Foundation, Indonesia; RMIT International University, Vietnam; China Medicine and Education International Holding Co.,

school expansion may have disproportionately benefitted families who are able to pay more for education, while potentially exacerbating inequity through a two-tier system of education. Without safeguards to ensure that investments in education benefit girls from the lowest quintile, the most marginalized rural areas or the most vulnerable groups, the unintended consequence of privatization strategies may be increased inequity. Even more problematic, in a sample of all Bank education projects from 2002 to 2004 countries with severe gender equity problems, such as Chad and Eritrea, had gender-blind education operations. It is critical that Bank operational designs contain incentives for girls' inclusion in education, especially when relying on the private sector to expand education provision (Lincove 2009).

**Decentralization** entails devolving the responsibility of the educational system from the federal government to subsidiary levels of government such as states, municipalities, or local authorities. Although there is evidence that decentralization can increase local participation, increase the responsiveness of schools and improve efficiency, there remains a real risk that it can increase inequity — such as happened in Ghana, Mexico and Argentina (UNESCO 2008). Local governments must already be equitable, possess enough financial and human resources, and operate transparently in order for decentralization to increase the access and quality of education by marginalized groups. (Alexander 2001). If the state does not proactively redistribute resources to compensate for communities with less means or capacity to invest in their school systems, the poorest villages will suffer from worse quality education services. Moreover, “if local elites control decentralized school management and have no incentive to increase girls' education, there will be no benefits for girls” (Lincove 2006, p 354).

A review of 48 Bank projects between 2002 and 2004 found that while many education operations include effective strategies for girls' education, governance reforms such as decentralization are not consistently gender sensitive. For example, in Afghanistan, the 2004 Education Quality Improvement Program worth \$35 million addressed only supply-side problems, while decentralizing authority for supply to the local level where communities may not support girls' education. Similarly in Tanzania, where girls' secondary enrollment is only 5%, the Bank's Secondary Education Development program, worth \$150 million, involved privatization and decentralization without mandating equity or female inclusion (Lincove 2009). Given that from 2001–2010 over half of Education Sector projects supported decentralization, it is imperative that the Bank ensures gender-sensitive implementation of its policies to devolve authority (World Bank 2011b).

### The Bank's education sector portfolio 2001–2010

The Bank's Independent Evaluation Group recently released a review of the Bank's education projects over the past decade. The review found several issues which have implications for the Bank's education sector investments going forward, and particularly areas which need to be strengthened to ensure a gender-sensitive approach to education development.

**Lack of equity measures:** Despite relatively strong analysis of distributional issues including income inequality, gender and rural/urban inequalities in the Bank's (education sector/department) project appraisals, findings from the recent portfolio review by the Bank's Independent Evaluation Group reveals a striking lack of equity targets explicitly included in project design. The education portfolio review shows that while education sector documents have relatively frequent treatment of equity issues, the project design, monitoring and accountability of education operations do not consistently address specific distributional issues for gender, let alone for disability, religion or other ethno-linguistic forms of discrimination. On average 15% of education projects committed to improving services or education outcomes for the poor, while 8% of Bank projects over the past ten years have included explicit gender equity objectives — and in Africa, only one out of 49 projects explicitly included a gender equity objective despite the dire gender inequality in many African countries (World Bank 2011b). Given that general interventions to improve aggregate level enrollments do not necessarily ensure that the most marginalized groups will access education, it is imperative that explicit objectives, interventions and indicators be monitored to ensure accountability for improving distributional equity, especially in countries with high rates of disparity between groups. Without strong accountability for gender-related targets, education projects may well include strong rhetoric and consideration for equity but that will not translate into consistent inclusion of equity objectives and indicators in project design.

**Lack of gender integration:** Further heightening the urgency for the Bank's Education Sector to explicitly integrate gender concerns, the IEG found that the Education Sector's integration of gender has declined since 2001. While the decrease may be linked to the increase in programmatic lending, the achievement of gender parity in some countries, and the focus on second-generation gender issues such as quality, the weak levels of gender integration in teacher training and vocational training confirm that more effort is needed to ensure that all education operations are gender-responsive (World Bank 2010a).

**Lack of investment in women-friendly sub-sectors:** The Bank has spent less than 1% of its education lending for low income countries between 2000 and 2010 on adult literacy — where women face much higher levels of illiteracy than men — revealing a startling neglect of the social dimensions of gender at the household level (World Bank 2010c, Stromquist 2011). Similarly, whereas ECCE can greatly improve school readiness and equalize school chances of boys and girls, the Bank has invested only \$174 million of \$12.65 billion in pre-primary level schooling since 2000, or just over 1% of its education lending for low-income countries (World Bank 2010c). On the other hand, Bank support for tertiary education, where the beneficiaries are more likely to be men than in any other educational sub-sector, has crested over \$2 billion in the last decade, with \$739 million committed just in 2010 (World Bank 2010c).



“Clearly, attention to gender equity is not a prerequisite for World Bank financing.”  
— Lincove (2009)

**Lack of demand-side incentives to safeguard girls’ education:** In many Bank operations outside the education sector, demand-side interventions have been included, to great success — including Bank support for conditional cash transfer programs in 13 countries, worth \$2.4 billion (World Bank 2010b). Reducing cost-sharing by parents and communities, basing school grants on gender equity targets, providing stipends, scholarships, eliminating school fees and other demand-side incentives will help to strengthen the accessibility of education for groups which have historically displayed a low demand for education. Yet, these strategies have been underutilized by the Bank in the education sector: over the past decade in Africa, the use of stipends, scholarships and other forms of demand side financing to support marginalized populations was used in just 9 of 35 education projects (Mundy 2010). While the Bank uses CCTs in social protection, community development and other human development sectors, the intra-sectoral impact of these subsidies need to be made to girls’ completion of primary and transition to secondary school. In addition, conditional cash transfers need to be employed more often in education operations themselves as a strategy to improve equity; and as an interim measure during the progressive reduction and elimination of public school fees to shore up public school revenues while reducing cost-recovery from poor families.

### The Education Sector Strategy 2020: Learning for All

The Bank’s new education sector strategy called ‘Learning for All’, (as opposed to the 2000 Strategy theme ‘Education For All’, focuses on strengthening education systems’ capacity to achieve learning, reading and math goals. The strategy, *Learning for All: Investing in People’s Knowledge and Skills to Promote Development* is expanding the Bank’s focus from basic education to focus on two objectives: universal primary completion and post-primary

“education for the knowledge economy” (World Bank 2011c). The Bank’s education sector will achieve this through, (1) support of reforms to strengthen education systems’ capacity to achieve learning goals; (2) building a high-quality knowledge base and (3) increasing the effectiveness of government resources and aid for education (World Bank 2011d).

The Education Sector Strategy states that ‘Learning for All’ will improve educational equity by identifying the scale and cause of the largest disparities (directing education system assessment and benchmarking to include specific targets in equality) and then up-scaling interventions most likely to be effective. In a footnote to the Strategy the Bank states:

*“Beginning in 2010, the Bank will commit US\$750 million to those countries furthest from the education MDGs with an emphasis on countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The World Bank will work closely with development partners, in particular through the Fast Track Initiative, to scale up results-based financing and to support innovative interventions in these countries...demand side interventions such as girls’ scholarships, conditional cash transfer programs and school grants can successfully address obstacles to school enrollment and attendance for disadvantaged populations, as well as in lagging areas.”*

It is a positive sign that the Bank’s Education Sector will take seriously the call for action to tackle gender inequality in education. The IEG portfolio review notes that the Bank’s new education strategy’s focus on learning “does not ensure that the poor will be targeted or will be the first to benefit” (World Bank 2011c). In order for the benefits of ‘Learning for All’ to improve quality education for girls, expanding enrollment in countries with high gender disparities, especially sub-nationally, will need to be maintained as a focus along with the imperatives to maintain quality standards and achieve learning outcomes (World Bank 2011b).

However, a few elements in the new strategy give cause for concern: its narrow focus on math and reading, its expanding reference to and reliance on private providers as a part of ‘education systems,’ and the institutional context of the Bank which lacks consistent application of gender safeguards and mechanisms to enforce the gender policy.

The Bank’s *Learning for All Strategy*’s narrow focus on reading and math outcomes provides a limited definition of foundational skills and ignores those educational topics which lead to more meaningful transformation of gender norms and social practices. By turning to a ‘results-based’ agenda defined by such a limited definition of ‘learning’ which ignores that schools are the site of the production and reproduction of gendered roles and biases, the Bank may miss the opportunity to invest in socially transformative education processes with less easily measured social outcomes.

In addition, the redefinition of education systems to encompass all learning opportunities in society, including private education providers, and a shift towards ‘system strengthening’ which is premised on government uptake of Bank diagnostic tools, quality measures and policy advice may accelerate the rate of privatization in education and with it the associated risks to gender equity. The implications of private sector expansion in education will require a stronger emphasis on government

coordination and regulation of private schools to benefit the bottom quintile, including by ensuring fee-free education, safe environments, and respect for labor rights. It will be critical that education operations target the poor through enhanced monitoring of sex and income disaggregated indicators, and up-scaling interventions to target girls from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Bank’s ‘high quality knowledge base’ to inform its system strengthening approach will be based in large part on the Bank’s global *System Assessment and Benchmarking Education for Results* (SABER). At a minimum, SABER should be designed from the outset to track and code gender equality measures (in both scale and measure) as a cross-cutting set of indicators throughout all program functions.

A focus on ‘systems strengthening’ should also include activities to promote gender equality including gender-sensitive teacher training, curriculum reform, female teacher recruitment and promotion, female participation in local education governance, increased investments in ECCE, secondary and adult education — and be linked to explicit outcomes for girls that go beyond parity measures to include learning and quality. Particularly as the Bank homes in on pressure-points in education systems, it should urgently address the bottlenecks in secondary education and identify gender-sensitive means to strengthen primary completion and transition to secondary for girls.

## WORLD BANK RECOMMENDATIONS

The World Bank, including its senior management, country directors, education sector board and task managers should implement the following practices in order to improve their impact on girls’ equality in education:

- **Track the gender policy:** The World Bank should enhance monitoring and reporting on Bank-wide compliance with gender operational policies, the extent to which departments are conducting gender analyses and participating in gender training and the degree to which Bank departments have integrated gender issues into its main policy and lending instruments.
- **Address the gender gaps:** The World Bank should mandate addressing gender gaps in all Bank activities, by requiring that Country Directors allocate resources to address gender gaps identified in CGAs and locating empowered gender experts in country offices to engender all Bank operations (including identification, design and implementation of gender-responsive education operations).
- **Invest wisely to achieve gender equality:** The World Bank should ensure that country planning scenarios take account of the true costs of achieving gender targets in education coverage, including the provision of multi-sector supports to educational attainment such as nutrition, health etc., the costs of eliminating all school fees, especially at the secondary level, and ensuring gender-responsive budget practices are used.
- **Engender education operations:** The Education Sector must ensure that all education operations are gender-sensitive by: assessing gender and minority disaggregated baseline data, including equity objectives for groups which still face large disparities in education project design, investing in demand-side and other interventions to target marginalized groups, and improving the links of education to sex-disaggregated vocational and livelihoods outcomes.
- **Make decentralization work for girls:** The Bank’s support for decentralization must include specific measures to strengthen the capacity and awareness of sub-national decision-making bodies, including through investments to gender-sensitize all decentralization training and workshops, improved training of school directors and teachers in gender-sensitive practice and support for the implementation of school-level strategies to increase girls’ participation.
- **Invest in education for girls and women:** The World Bank’s *Learning for All Strategy* must prioritize the learning needs of girls and women, including by increasing investments in pre-primary, secondary and adult literacy — while ensuring that all projects contain equity measures to ensure that the poorest groups are able to benefit from Bank education policy advice and finance.

# 10

## LEVERAGING THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY TO ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY: THE EDUCATION FOR ALL FAST TRACK INITIATIVE

The Education For All Fast Track Initiative has become an influential mechanism for education sector development. As a partnership comprised of developing country governments, donors and civil society, it is uniquely placed to synergize efforts around gender at country-level. Its finance, global education standard setting and coordination of education stakeholders at global and country levels have increasingly informed the strategies employed by governments and development agencies addressing the challenges to education faced by girls. The Education For All Fast Track Initiative partnership, of which the World Bank is an influential member, has become the pre-eminent vehicle for global and country-level basic education policy dialogue, while also injecting significant funding into countries which face large obstacles in achieving universal primary education to assist the implementation of their national strategies.

By providing technical support for the development of quality national education sector plans (ESPs), financing the implementation of public primary and lower secondary education services and coordinating donor agencies at global and country-level, the FTI partnership has sought to position itself as the central mechanism to improve aid effectiveness in basic education. The ESPs in 45 countries have been endorsed by the FTI partnership and available education data indicates that by and large these countries have performed better than non-FTI-endorsed countries. Although FTI has not succeeded in mobilizing the resources needed to achieve universal primary completion (UPC), it can be credited with enabling a handful of donors to increase their aid to basic education through its Multi-donor Trust Fund, which has been used at the country level to advance UPC, including girls' completion of primary school. This additional finance has been the main incentive for countries to develop ESPs and apply for FTI endorsement and the FTI's local education groups (or LEGs, international cooperation partners, civil society and national government officials) have helped to coordinate and align donor policy in support of those ESPs (Cambridge 2010).

### The EFA FTI and girls' education

The evidence from 30 countries endorsed by FTI between 2003 and 2008 demonstrates that the combination of political will to create and implement strong ESPs, additional external resources and proactive efforts to increase access to education have all led to real improvements in gender parity and UPC.

The recently released report *Fast Tracking Girls' Education* found that girls in FTI-endorsed countries had seen an increase in gross enrollment rates from 82% to 100% — demonstrating the dangers of relying on aggregate gross enrollment rates. A more accurate picture is painted when looking at girls' primary school completion in FTI countries, which also rose — but from 56% in 2002 to 68% in 2008, meaning that girls' gross enrollments — though increasing — mask huge rates of drop-out. Nevertheless, the data for FTI countries contrasts strongly with the data for non-FTI endorsed low-income countries, which have much greater gender disparities in enrollment, completion and learning. Indeed, in over half of FTI-endorsed countries, girls and boys have achieved or are close to achieving equal primary school completion (Clarke and Wilson 2011).

Despite this progress, many FTI-endorsed countries are characterized by overall low enrollment in primary school, some remain far from reaching gender parity in primary school and significantly more have large gender gaps in enrollment and completion at the secondary level. While the last decade has witnessed significant improvements with respect to girls' access and completion of primary school, gender equality is still a dream, particularly at secondary level, for the majority of FTI-endorsed countries. As the partnership expands to include countries with high populations and fragile states, the range of problems facing girls' access to basic education will become more complex and require more proactive solutions. Furthermore, even in FTI-endorsed countries where gender parity in access has been achieved, poor education quality disproportionately impacts girls' attendance, repetition, retention and performance. In every high-income country, girls in primary school significantly outperform their male counterparts in reading. In FTI-endorsed countries, there is not one country where girls are significantly outperforming boys (Clark and Wilson 2011). The FTI's focus on primary access and completion has led to numeric gains in girls' education but it is imperative that the partnership works to strengthen its approach to gender equality in early learning, primary completion, and transition to secondary school.

There are a number of levers within FTI processes for education plan preparation, appraisal, endorsement, financing, capacity building and monitoring to incentivize gender-responsive education strategies and support their

impact on gender equality in education. By bringing together development partners at country level to develop and implement ESPs, the FTI can bring governments' attention to gender equity objectives, analyze gender outcomes, brainstorm methods to target girls, highlight the need for increased government commitment and resources and monitor progress through the Joint Sector Reviews. Despite the multiple entry points for gender mainstreaming, since the launch of FTI in 2002 gender has not been systematically addressed in FTI processes, and in many instances its inclusion has been weak (Clarke and Seel 2005).

The FTI has historically focused on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in education, prioritizing gender parity in enrollment and completion (measured by intake into first grade and the primary completion rate disaggregated by sex) (EFA FTI Secretariat 2009). At the global level, the FTI's **Indicative Framework** (IF) has influenced national basic education policies by providing

country-level benchmarks in policy, service delivery, and financing — though previous iterations of the IF have been heavily critiqued by academic and civil society for imposing ill-conceived standards (Klees, Winthrop and Adams 2010).

**Appraisal Guidelines** (AG) were drafted to supplement the IF and provide guidance to country teams, often the Local Donor Group (LDG), when appraising the ESP to determine if it meets standards for FTI endorsement. While the IF and the AG have historically fostered policy dialogue about cross-cutting issues such as gender in some countries, in most countries the appraisal process itself missed opportunities to strengthen the inclusion of policies that would advance gender equity in the ESPs (Cambridge 2010). The FTI's 'light touch' approach to education development, which is dependent on developing countries and donor's willingness and ability to step in at country level and provide strong leadership to integrate gender into the ESPs, has led to weak influence of the IF in terms of gender integration in ESPs.

## *Beyond financing: global efforts supporting girls' education*

FTI is the major financing mechanism for basic education in low-income countries, but a number of other agencies and initiatives play important roles in co-ordination, advocacy and technical advice in the field of gender and education. It has not been within the scope of this report to evaluate their work, but when considering the potential for global renewal of efforts on gender equality and education it is important to acknowledge existing platforms and partners as a foundation from which to build.

**UNESCO** is the coordinating agency for Education For All and its support centres on advocacy, ensuring that gender perspectives inform education policy and practices as well as supporting the provision of services such as teacher training and developing learning materials that are informed by the gender perspective. Under the leadership of Director-General Irina Bokova, UNESCO has recently convened a **Global Partnership for Girls and Women's Education**, with private sector and government participation. This will provide leadership and advocacy particularly on women's literacy and girls' education at secondary level. UNESCO is also part of the United Nations Adolescent Girls Task Force, an interagency programming framework which specifically addresses the most marginalized and disadvantaged adolescent girl, which also includes UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM, ILO and WHO.

The **United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)** is a partnership of organizations committed to narrowing the gender gap in primary and secondary education. Members are drawn from the UN system, donor agencies, international financial institutions, civil society and the private sector, with the aim of bringing more girls to school. The initiative works at global, regional and country levels to ensure that girls receive a quality education that prepares them to be full and active participants in their societies. UNGEI supports country-led development efforts and seeks to influence decision-making and investments in ways that ensure gender equity and equality in national education policies, plans and programs.

As well as hosting UNGEI, **UNICEF** directly supports girls' education through Back to School campaigns, school fee abolition, child-friendly schools and early childhood education. UNICEF also engages in advocacy especially for the rights of the most marginalized and disadvantaged girls and boys. Other advocacy champions for girls within the UN system more broadly include The Girl Effect and Girl Up, both supported by the United Nations Foundation, while the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Committee for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), also play an important role in monitoring country performance, hearing complaints and interpreting human rights provisions in education among other thematic issues. At the regional level institutions and provisions such as the InterAmerican Court of Human Rights and the African Union's Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, have had important roles in establishing human rights standards in education.

Civil society organizations, coalitions and platforms are essential partners in the movement to secure the right to education for women and girls, men and boys. One example is REPEM (Red de Educación Popular entre Mujeres) is a non-profit civil society organization founded in 1981 with its headquarters in Montevideo, Uruguay. It connects around 100 NGOs and experts from 18 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The members combine forces to demand access to gender sensitive Education For All women and girls. FAWE (Forum of African Women Educationalists) has a membership including ministers of education, university vice-chancellors, education policy-makers, researchers, gender specialists and human rights activists. Its activities include regional and global advocacy, promotion of good practice and research. Forums such as FISC — the International Civil Society Forum organized as a platform to prepare lobbying positions and promote dialogue ahead of CONFINTEA VI have also provided important moments for dialogue within civil society on issues concerning rights and equality.



This inconsistent inclusion of gender in country-level education planning has meant that in practice, no national education plan has ever been rejected for failing to integrate gender nor has there been consistent screening of plans for gender-related objectives, measures and interventions. What will be critical in the next phase of the FTI partnership's efforts is to effectively address why countries have systematically failed girls by neglecting to robustly address gender equity. While 28 of the FTI countries included more than one gender-responsive intervention (curriculum/textbook, teacher training, monitoring outcomes, school feeding, administration capacity, teacher management, health and HIV/AIDS, scholarships and incentives, school environment, advocacy and laws and policies) — poorly-performing countries such as Niger, Togo, Liberia, and the Central African Republic, all low performers on the Availability Table, have paid scant attention to the gaping disadvantages faced by girls in their education systems despite FTI approval and financing for their ESP (Clark and Wilson 2011).

The FTI partnership has also played a role in coordinating governments and donors in the costing of ESPs; however, the scenario planning tools to estimate the financing gap to achieve universal basic education have typically been under-estimated (Cambridge 2010). In practice, the reliance on these tools does not encourage proper costing of measures to eliminate gender and other inequities. While donors may be loathe to accept the true costs of achieving gender equity and governments similarly unwilling to ask for unrealistic sums of external finance, the consistent underestimation of costs and the

zero-sum game of policy trade-offs will only further hamper progress towards the immediate up-scaling of interventions targeted to increase gender equality.

### **FTI reform: A breakthrough for girls' education?**

In 2009, the FTI partnership underwent a mid-term evaluation to determine the quality and impact of its operations, which has sparked much debate and deliberation about the way forward for the partnership. The current reform process provides a huge opportunity to the FTI partners to meaningfully integrate gender issues into its activities, policies, frameworks and guidance — and re-tool the incentives for its partners to set and achieve bold targets in girls' education. As the FTI undergoes a redesign and re-launch in 2011, culminating in a replenishment campaign aiming to raise \$2.5 billion, the EFA FTI could position itself as the mechanism to inspire a breakthrough in girls' education. Indeed, FTI has signalled its intention to assume a leadership role in the area of girls' education by adopting girls' education as 1 of 3 themes that it commits to prioritize over the coming 4 years. While the initial draft has expressed strong commitment to expand and improve support to girls' education, further elaboration is needed to establish FTI's position as a credible and influential force for progress in this sphere.

To achieve a breakthrough for girls' education it is critical that strong gender equity targets are mainstreamed into all components of the process and that all members of the FTI partnership align their support, including funding, behind achieving these targets. A range of new ways of working could, if done right, incentivize a comprehensive and

holistic approach to gender equality which will enable all FTI partners to make concrete the right to Education For All. As the FTI partnership sets out defining its policy priorities and identifying the most effective implementation, there is considerable scope for a range of bold and ambitious strategies to align FTI policy and funding behind the principle of gender equity. For the FTI partnership to truly leverage a breakthrough for girls' education, including increasing primary school completion and transition to secondary the new strategy should:

**1. Expand the scope of financing and policy support for girls' transition to lower secondary, and include a more ambitious approach to abolishing fees for secondary school.**

Given the significant incentivizing role of FTI finance, it is imperative that FTI donors expand the purposes of their funding and policy support to include not just primary education but also the transition to lower secondary. Countries with large gender disparities in primary and secondary should be eligible for additional financing to develop and implement girls' education strategies. The Supervising Entity for FTI funds, most commonly the World Bank, should ensure that FTI financing is invested in gender-responsive programs, that they utilize results frameworks with gender-disaggregated targets and data and provide top-up financing and demand-side incentives in appropriately structured and targeted ways. The FTI should offer additional funding to support the elimination of all school fees at primary and secondary level, and the provision of demand-side incentives to encourage the completion of primary and the transition to lower secondary.

Therefore the costing of these education plans must be rigorous and publicly available, and based on gender-responsive budgeting rather than concern to reduce the calculation of the financing gap. The IMF, World Bank and FTI partners should ensure that countries with large gender gaps adopt gender-responsive macroeconomic programs, undergo a gender audit and ensure that demand and supply-side policies and practices in education are responsive to the needs of girls.

FTI also needs to strengthen and increase its support for technical assistance at the plan implementation level with an increased focus on building country capacity to advance gender equity in education including in gender-sensitive budgeting. By increasing funding for countries which demonstrate the political will to achieve gender parity throughout the schooling cycle and providing top-up financing for countries both on the basis of needs and performance in achieving measurable results in gender equity, the FTI can enable countries to realize the dream of free Education For All.

**2. Better address countries with large out-of-school populations, fragile and post-conflict states, which account for the majority of the world's out-of-school girls.**

FTI has started to engage in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Pakistan. The complexity of these countries requires a

different, tailored approach. Girls face increased challenges in accessing and completing school in fragile settings, and the barriers to gender equity they face are quite different to the situation of girls in other low-income countries. For this effort to succeed, it is imperative that the FTI Secretariat, from the beginning of these partnerships, integrates a gendered analysis that is well suited to the country context in its efforts to overcome these barriers to UPC and gender equity. Bilateral and multilateral organizations and Education Clusters working in these countries must ensure that resources are coordinated in support of programs to increase social protection for girls.

**3. Integrate gender into the new Results Framework (RF)**

The FTI is developing a new *Results Framework* which is intended to set out the objectives the partnership will achieve and strengthen the connection between all steps in the FTI process. In combination with the revised *Appraisal Guidelines* for plan endorsement, ESPs, *Country Status Reports* and *Joint Sector Reviews*, will allow members of the Local Education Group including government partners to coherently monitor their collective efforts in achieving the objectives in ESPs. The new RF could serve to unify a sound policy framework for the entire FTI partnership by articulating the results chain to effectively achieve education outcomes — but it must address the obstacles to implementing the right to education, including those identified under the 4A framework, if it is to overcome the narrow and instrumental benchmarks for education which it has relied on in the past.

The RF needs to be bold with strong targets and indicators that are sex-disaggregated, with universal completion of quality secondary school as an overarching objective. School must be relevant, appropriate and of a sufficiently high quality so that marginalized girls graduate from secondary school with the skills they need to protect themselves and fully participate in society. The indicators in the RF should be chosen to measure both quantitative and qualitative progress toward this outcome, including by sex-disaggregating all data, and the appraisal process needs to ensure that strong targets for advancing gender equity are included in the ESP.

To incentivize countries to integrate gender into their ESPs, the FTI should provide sufficient additional financing for policy work to develop girls' education strategies in ESPs. The JSRs must report on plan performance with respect to gender outcomes and facilitate responsive course-correction in countries as needed to ensure that strategies are effectively advancing towards ambitious targets in gender equity. They should be systematized and annual with multi-stakeholder participation, including the participation of civil society, and especially national and local women's groups.

**4. Engender country-level coordination.**

The FTI model is heavily dependent on country-level processes and therefore FTI in-country tends to be as strong or as weak as the country-level process. Ensuring that all stakeholders that are affected by the FTI are able to effectively participate in its process will strengthen the country-level process and lead to stronger, more comprehensive policies.

- **The Local Education Group (LEG)** should be broadened to ensure that all stakeholders, including women's organizations, Mothers' Associations and child rights advocates are included in the ESP planning and endorsement process, as well as monitoring the implementation of the plan.
- **UNICEF** should step up its contributions to the education sector and mandate that all UNICEF partners at country level ensure gender-sensitive education policy and planning in the LEGS, including through supporting gender-sensitive budgeting of education costs and rights-based targets in primary and secondary school.
- **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)** need to have an enhanced role in the FTI partnership at country-level, both through meaningful participation and influence in LEG activities such as ESP development, appraisal, endorsement and through decentralized monitoring of budget expenditures and education service delivery. The CSO constituency of the FTI should proactively engage women's groups, including those working on gender issues in other sectors such as the ILO to participate in the FTI's processes.
- **Bilateral donors:** The FTI depends on the collective contributions of its partners, through the EFA fund as the primary incentive for developing countries to seek endorsement and through bilateral programs. It is essential that donors strengthen their gender-programming and act as Supervising Entity for FTI funds, to ensure greater ownership and engagement of donor partners in the implementation of the partnerships support for girls' education.

## 5. FTI Partners need to implement the right to education.

This breakthrough will not be possible unless donors to the FTI seriously accept the challenge of gender equality, accept their international and national legal obligations and provide sufficient resources to turn the course of global development in favour of women and girls. Ensuring that the resources are there to enable countries to implement ambitious plans to target and improve gender equity in education is the first and most important step. While some argue that resources can be used more efficiently, no amount of efficiency will fill the resource gaps that daunt countries with huge strides to make before they achieve universal school coverage. Others argue that the economic crisis has brought donors to their knees, yet governments around the world easily invest in the well-being of the richest quintile and the corporate behemoths. International law has provided a framework for governments around the world to fulfil their obligation to ensure the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to an education.

While global monitoring of progress describes the increasing availability of school for girls, the international community must ensure that education *accessibility, acceptability* and *adaptability* are guaranteed through international and domestic legal frameworks, macroeconomic models and national budget allocations, as well as education policy and practice. It is time that governments around the world unite to finance a breakthrough in girls' education: tomorrow's children are in their hands, and, with them, the future of the world.

## Room for improvement in development co-operation

This report, Make It Right, has analyzed national education policy and practice and the role of international financing institutions. Development co-operation, though not the focus of this report, plays a significant part in both financing and influencing policy on gender and education. Many of the policy initiatives cited in this report will need substantial external funds to be realized at scale, and therefore rich countries need to increase both bilateral and multilateral contributions to encourage ambitious planning on the part of national governments. It is important that such contributions are long-term, predictable and aligned to government plans through sector or general budget support, to enable the hiring of professional teachers, invest in infrastructure and thus build effective education systems.

All countries in the OECD Development Assistance Committee subscribe to the MDG goals and a number actively engage in the partnerships and initiatives mentioned above. A number of countries, notably the UK, Norway, Sweden, Canada, Denmark and the United States have also been vocal advocates for girls' education in international fora.

Analysis of financing patterns, however, shows that development assistance is not focused on countries with the greatest gender disparities (GCE 2010). Only 6 out of 22 countries allocate more than one-fifth of their aid to countries where significantly more girls than boys are out of school, and only one — Denmark — gives more than 50%. While girls' enrollment is a limited indicator of gender equality in education, this trend suggests a disappointing lack of real commitment to tackling gender injustice. Moreover, few donors give significant proportions of their aid in the form of budget support: 19 of the 22 give less than 5% of their aid through this modality.

**Development co-operation partners need to consider the focus and modalities of their funding, as well as ensuring that it incentivises and supports countries to enact policies favouring gender equality.**

Current initiatives under development include a UK girls' education initiative, and in Germany '10 Objectives for Education', both of which need to address the financial and policy barriers to achieving gender equality in education.

# 11

## CONCLUSION: RENEWING COMMITMENT TO GIRLS' RIGHT TO EDUCATION

The right to an education that is free, quality and emancipating cannot be questioned or bargained with. It should light the path for a more sustainable, exponential and equitable development trajectory for women and girls, and for the planet. Yet in order to correct course, the international community must face the serious shortcomings of the past and current assault on women's rights perpetuated under the watch of governments around the world. By setting a collective goal to set right this historic wrong, governments around the world can make concrete steps to ensure that the persistent discrimination, abuse and fear girls face in and out of school is ended.

This report has shown just how far the world is from truly realizing the right to Education For All girls as well as boys. The Availability Table casts a harsh light on the reality of girls' experience of education: in far too many poorer countries, girls are more likely than boys to drop out of primary school early and have far fewer chances of progressing to higher levels of education. When multiple factors of disadvantage are taken into account, it is clear that poorer girls from marginalized communities are at the bottom of the heap as far as educational opportunity is concerned. In conflict states, girls have even more barriers to contend with, facing serious risk of being terrorized or sexually subjugated on the way to or even in school. These are rights violations that should not be tolerated by any government or international institution.

Analysis of the underlying causes of this disparity, through the 'lenses' of accessibility, acceptability and adaptability, exposes the uneven adoption of policies and practices needed to improve availability across all levels of education. Consequently girls are subject to a variety of discriminatory practices that diminish the quality and length of their learning experience. At the same time, use of the 4A framework identifies clear priorities for action by governments and highlights examples of practices that have worked in some countries. Achieving progress across the board to enable girls to have an education that is complete, safe, enriching and empowering is not impossible, but a massive increase in political will, backed by resources, will be needed to realize this dream.

While the locus of change is and always will be at country level, the report's examination of the role of the IFIs is instructive. It reveals how the gender-blindness of the IMF's prevailing views interacts with the World Bank's inconsistent or contradictory

policies and practices regarding gender and education. Together their effect is to curtail the space that countries have to pursue progressive pathways to gender equality in education, providing governments with limited tools to address deeply-entrenched gender inequalities in society at large and education in particular. Currently, the IFIs' policies do not support the spirit and the letter of the 4A framework. A major shift in the fundamental approaches of both institutions is required to ensure that they encourage macroeconomic and sector planning that combat gender injustice in education and more widely.

As the sole multi-lateral financing mechanism for education, the EFA FTI has a clear role to play. While some results — especially in girls' enrollment — have been impressive, FTI has not yet fulfilled its promise in providing the motivation and framework for countries to prioritize gender equality in education. 2011 could be decisive year for FTI to step up to the plate and prove that it can leverage change in this area of considerable interest to the international community. It must seize this moment and step out of the shadows it has too long occupied. All FTI partners — developing countries, donors and civil society — will be required to up-scale their efforts through a renewed partnership for the education of girls and boys alike.

High-level political leadership will also be essential to create the conditions for increased political will and conducive macro policies. The recent experience of the UN Secretary-General's development of a Joint Action Plan for accelerating progress on maternal and newborn health is salutary. Through sustained engagement throughout 2009 and 2010, the SG brought together key partners — including governments, foundations, the corporate sector, civil society and United Nations agencies — in a targeted effort to improve the health of women and children. This resulted in a raft of commitments from all partners that were brought together and showcased at the UN High-Level meeting on the MDGs in September 2010. Although some commitments were contested, the initiative nevertheless created valuable momentum for change in the period up to 2015. 2011 should set the stage for a similar effort on gender and education and put this issue of vital concern to the global community at its rightful place at the top of the international agenda.

## AGENDA FOR CHANGE: REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

The intention of this report is to provide a hard-hitting wake-up call to governments, donors, and campaigners that the world is still failing on the EFA goal of gender equality. The report has drawn on examples of rights violations, best practice and lessons learned to draw conclusions and make recommendations. The global community will need to recast the goal of gender equality to go beyond the third Millennium Development Goal by redefining the gender equality indicators, focusing not only on access to primary but also on the transition to and completion of secondary school.

These should include qualitative indicators to ensure that the education experience is geared towards overcoming of stereotyping and inequalities between boys and girls within and beyond school. By highlighting the need for more gender-sensitive/responsive interventions across the 4A framework (to improve the accessibility, availability, adaptability and acceptability of education for all), the report seeks to inform advocacy to get girls in school, ensure they stay and experience an education geared in overcoming discrimination within and beyond school.

### The way forward in 2011: action now for women and girls

2011 must be the year for concrete action at national, regional and global level towards achieving not only gender parity in primary enrollment, but also the full realization of the right to education for boys and girls equally. A common policy agenda should be developed to ensure that primary and secondary schooling is fully available and accessible for girls and that the education practiced in schools is geared towards non-discrimination and the overcoming of inequalities between boys and girls within and beyond the education system.

***Governments can and must act to make education not only available, but also accessible, acceptable and adaptable. Schools should be free and safe for girls. This will ensure that girls have the opportunity to stay and learn in school up to primary completion and progress to secondary and tertiary levels.***

1. Strong government plans, backed by resources, must be the centerpiece of efforts to achieve gender equality in education. All governments should conduct a gender audit of national education strategies. This must be complemented by gender-responsive budgeting to ensure that policies and plans to promote and foster girls' right to education are fully funded. All government plans should address the following:
  - Progressive elimination of the cost barriers preventing girls from completing primary school and progressing to secondary and tertiary. This should include abolition of fees and other charges and demand-side measures such as stipends, school feeding programs and subsidized or free transportation to school.
  - Improvements in the school infrastructure, such as building separate latrines and ensuring secure school premises.
  - Recruitment policies that ensure balanced representation of men and women in the teaching profession.
  - Measures to eliminate gender bias and stereotypes in teaching and learning, such as ensuring positive representation of women in textbooks and training in gender-equitable classroom practice
  - Laws and practices to eliminate and properly address all forms of gender violence within schools.
  - Tracking of progress against equity-based targets for enrollment, progression and learning in a way that disaggregates data by gender, age, grade, wealth and location, among others.
2. Governments should be open and transparent in their budgeting and planning processes and especially engage women's groups as part of their commitment to broad-based civil society participation in education sector planning and budget oversight.
3. Governments must also table and enact laws to prohibit discriminatory practices in school administration, such as exclusion on grounds of pregnancy or child marriage.

While the main locus of change in the quest to achieve gender equality in education is the State, the role of international institutions remains vital. ***The global community must actively engage in efforts to secure equal rights in and through education for girls and boys.***

4. The United Nations Secretary-General should convene a high-level event at the UNGASS in September 2011 to raise political awareness of the enduring challenge in gender equality in education, and set out a global strategy to ensure that concrete action is taken to up-scale interventions to achieve gender equality in education at all levels.
5. The high-level event should establish a process for eliciting new commitments to achieve gender equality in education which should report back in 2012.

6. The IMF and Ministries of Finance should ensure that macroeconomic modelling, advice and policy making are gender-sensitive and account for the disproportionate burden on women of public sector spending constraints.
7. The World Bank should ensure that all agreements with and operations in client countries are gender sensitive, and that the new Learning for All strategy prioritizes gender parity in access and learning throughout all levels of education.
8. All education donors should make robust 3-year commitments to the FTI replenishment, while scaling up their bilateral support in alignment with agreed gender targets in primary and secondary school, including the progressive elimination of all cost-barriers to education. Bilateral support needs to be predictable and should be targeted towards regions and countries where girls are disadvantaged relative to boys.
9. Pursuit of the goal of gender parity in enrollments has obscured the need for balanced attention to, and investment in, policies that will ensure that girls can stay in school and acquire the learning they need to empower them throughout life. The post-MDG framework should include comprehensive targets that address governance and implementation issues, as well retention, completion and learning for girls and boys.

## ANNEX A

The Availability Table is not a precise ranking of countries but rather a system for demonstrating overall position and progress on girls' education. There are a total of 8 indicators in the scoring table, giving a maximum score of 80 points. The data is taken from the UIS, either directly or formed as composite indicators, from between 2005–2010. Where data was not available the country was given a score of '0' for that indicator. The main criterion for inclusion in the table was countries with a GDP per capita of less than \$3000. Within this, countries were excluded if they have a population of less than 1 million. This included Cape Verde, Kiribati, Comoros, Micronesia, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanatu, Marshall Islands, Maldives, Sao Tome and Principe, Guyana, Bhutan, Belize, and Djibouti.

For each indicator, the figures correspond to a score between 0 and 10. It should be noted that the score boundaries were devised so as to reflect the variance between countries for each indicator. Each of the eight indicators received equal weighting within the scoring system.

The first indicator of 'adjusted NER to primary for girls' can be used in order to exemplify. For this indicator, countries that scored 100–98% received 10 points, countries that scored 97–96% received 9 points, countries that scored 95–94% received 8 points, countries that scored 93–92% received 7 points, countries that scored 91–90% received 6 points, countries that scored 89–87% received 5 points, countries that scored 86–82% received 4 points, countries that scored 81–77% received 3 points, countries that scored 76–70% received 2 points, countries that scored 69–60% received 1 point, and countries that scored 59% or lower received 0 points.



**The global community must actively engage in efforts to secure equal rights in and through education for girls and boys.**

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