



GIRLS' EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: MIND THE GAP



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



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for Rural Education

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List of Abbreviations

CCT	Conditional Cash Transfers
CEE	Central and East European Region
CFS	Child-Friendly School
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DFID	Department for International Development
ECCE	Early Child Care and Education
EFA	Education for All
GCS	German Church School
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GRP	Gender Responsive Pedagogy
ICT	Information Communication technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PTA	Parents-Teacher Association
SNE	Special Needs Education
UIS	UNESCO institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNGEI	United Nations Girls Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme



CHAPTER ONE:

GIRLS' EDUCATION—MIND THE GAP

“Empowering girls, ensuring their human rights and addressing the discrimination and violence they face are essential to progress for the whole human family. One of the best ways to achieve all of the goals is to provide girls with the education they deserve. The education of girls and women is a basic right, and the best possible investment for human development”.

Irina Bokova
UNESCO Director-General

The 1990 World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand, marked the beginning of intensified international support for assuring access to quality education for girls, a cause that was reaffirmed ten years later at the World Education Forum in Dakar, and in the Millennium Development Goals (2000). On 25 September 2015, the UN adopted new 17 Sustainable Development Goals (2016–2030) at the United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development. Of the 17 SDGs, SDG 4 and SDG 5 enshrined in the New Global Agenda for Sustainable Development draw international attention to commit to (i) “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all,” and (ii) “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. The Education 2016–2030 Framework Outline for Action endorsed by 184 Summit participants provides guidelines for implementing SDG 4.

Indeed developing countries, over the last three decades or so, have recorded real progress and realised significant gains in girls' education. This demonstrates that with shared goals and collective action among all stakeholders, we can change the educational scene and prospects for girls around the world.

Despite the unprecedented progress, UNESCO-UIS (2014–15) data reveal that in about 78 developing countries progress on girls' education has stalled and in an additional 30 countries that have successfully enrolled girls and boys in primary and secondary education, boys and girls are trapped in low-quality learning. There are another 30 countries where children are successfully enrolled and learning. However, girls are behind boys in mathematics. Even where the enrolment gap is closed, many girls continue to drop out of school prematurely, especially during adolescence, making them vulnerable to abuse and deprivation and curtailing future opportunities in life.

The evidence also reveals striking regional disparities in girls' education emanating as a result of socio-economic, racial, ethnic, religious and cultural barriers. For instance, large shortfalls remain, especially in parts of South Asia and in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa. The shortfalls tend to be greatest where poverty is severe, in remote areas, and in areas where girls are more socially secluded or where conflict persists.



It is striking to note that nine percent children around the world are still out of school. Among these, almost half of the girls will never set foot in a classroom, equivalent to 15 million girls, compared with just over a third of the boys. An estimated 31 million girls of primary school-age and 32 million girls of lower secondary school-age were not enrolled in school in 2013—narrowing their horizons and undermining their potential to contribute to society (EFA/GMR 2015). Of course, enrolment does not automatically mean regular attendance. Millions more children, particularly girls, never reach secondary school, and transitioning girls to secondary school and keeping them there through graduation is a critical issue, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Nearly 40 percent of out-of-school children live in Sub-Saharan Africa; 35 percent live in South Asia (EFA/GMR 2015).

The scant research reflects the low priority given to gender and education by governments, international organizations, and foundations. As we look towards 2030 and beyond, it is opportune for policy makers to make special efforts to address the economic, social and cultural barriers that keep even larger proportions of girls in poor countries out of school and take a more transformative approach to girls' education by tackling discrimination, violence and exclusion of girls from education. Governments everywhere must do far more for girls' right to education to bolster girls' capacities and to create conditions for the fulfilment of their aspirations. As such, there is an urgent need for programming in girls' education—a programming that stresses and focuses on gender parity and improving their learning and measuring learning outcomes.

At the same time, investment in girls' education is equally important as an international and national priority so as to abolish the historical gender gap in formal knowledge and skills acquisition. Equality exists when girls and boys have access to quality education, resources and productive work in all domains, and when they are able to share power and knowledge on this basis. This requires stronger legalization and policies of protection and inclusion.

This paper reviews the progress in girls' education, the work that remains to be done, and strategies for success in 9 developing countries—Cambodia, China, India Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan in Asia and Ethiopia and Ghana in Sub-Saharan Africa. It underscores, among others, the need for governments, civil society organisations, NGOs, the private sector, bilateral and multilateral donors to undertake in-depth periodic reviews to ascertain the issues and challenges in girls' education and accordingly build robust partnerships and implement a diverse range of strategic interventions for providing girls with access to quality education, materials, safe spaces to learn and a “voice”, and to mobilise and build capacity within governments, communities and schools, training and mentoring teachers, trustees and community leaders. The paper asserts that targeting girls' education in general and education of marginalised, disabled and girls from migrant communities in particular, with more than half of the target group living in high-risk and conflict-affected environments, be accorded high propriety in national education development agendas.

It would not be fair if we endorse the commonly held view that contemporary education maliciously set against either boys or girls. However, we have to admit that structurally and functionally, our schools still fail to recognize and fulfil gender-specific needs. The task before us is to more deeply understand the gendered brains of our children. Then comes the practical application, with its sense of purpose and productivity, as we help each girl child learn from within her own mind.



The paper is divided in four chapters. Chapter I describes the rationale and justification for commissioning this study together with its scope and limitations.

Chapter II assesses the reasons as to why gender inequality is widening at both secondary and tertiary levels of education while progress is being made in these nine countries in primary education. While doing so, the paper adopts indigenous, contextual and integrated perspectives to understand the achievement of girls' education in these Asian and Sub-Saharan African countries. It reflects on the main policy initiatives and strategic measures undertaken by the governments, international organizations and civil societies. The paper describes how and why the progress in girls' education has stalled, the work that remains to be done, how the successful interventions that are already having a positive impact can be scaled up, how new interventions such as technological innovations, developing new partnerships, and adapting proven solutions, can be applied for success in achieving both the parity and quality girls' education.

Chapter III explores constraints to girls' education and corresponding strategic interventions and measures for policy makers to create schools for girls that nurture academic achievement, provide physical and emotional safety and welcome girl students. In particular, the chapter concentrates on curriculum, learning material, learning environment, girls-friendly teachers and use of ICT for creating environments that are gender expansive and fluid, where girls can learn and express a wide range of subjects, emotions, interests, and behaviours that fall anywhere along the gender continuum, that is: how would a gender inclusive environment affirm girls and allow them to express their interests and find confidence in their strengths?

Finally, Chapter IV summarizes the extensive body of research on the state of girls' education in the developing world today; the impact of educating girls' on families, economies, and nations; and the most promising approaches to increasing girls' enrolment and educational quality. The overall conclusions are straightforward: educating girls pays off substantially. While challenges still exist, the section provides some guidance and recommendations on how governments can address them and make significant progress.

As the study is based on nine countries, generalisation of its findings in a given national context or globally, should be exercised with utmost caution. Secondly, The data presented are taken primarily from the UNESCO-UIS databank (2014–2015) and the national documents. For some countries, where statistics are not available for the year under consideration in the study, the data for the latest year available are reported. These and all other statistics supplemented from other sources have been either referenced and/or given in the endnotes.

The paper is a first step to identifying—and implementing—the actions that will allow us collectively to keep the promises we made. It is for educators and educational policy makers in the Sub-Saharan African and Asian regions, educational practitioners, staff in ministries and donor agencies, human rights groups. It is hoped that it will serve as a reminder for us to speed up the work we are doing in girls' education.



CHAPTER TWO:

GENDER INEQUALITY IN EDUCATION: MAKING ROOM FOR GIRLS

“In the 19th Century, the central moral challenge was slavery. In the 20th Century, it was the battle against totalitarianism. In this century the paramount moral challenge will be the struggle for gender equality around the world.”

Kristof and Sheryl

2.0 Girls' Education—A Paramount Challenge

Kristof and Sheryl (2009) take an unflinching look at the oppression of girls and women around the world. “Achieving gender equality in the developing world is not merely a matter of justice but of unleashing nations' potential for economic development. Poor countries want to grow faster economically. They look for any kind of resource they can exploit. Far from merely making moral appeals, it is impossible for countries to climb out of poverty if only a fraction of women participate in the labour force. China's meteoric rise was due to women's economic empowerment: 80% of the factory workers in the Guangdong province are female; six of the 10 richest self-made women in the world are Chinese. If one can show the poor countries that China is booming, partly because it figured out how to use the female half of the population, then that is an argument that really has resonance for them.”

Thus, our challenge is how can we amplify and leapfrog girls' education as a sustainable and renewable power source to truly tackle and eliminate the paramount moral challenge of our time—mass discrimination and violence against girls both inside and outside the school around the world.

2.1 Gender Gaps: State of Girls' Education

Education for All (EFA) is an over-arching initiative, spanning across a broad set of educational dimensions. It focuses on early childhood care and education, universal primary education and secondary education to youth and adult literacy with gender parity and quality of education as crosscutting thematic and programme priorities.

More specifically, there are 6 EFA Goals, where the progress on each can be traced with the help of a set of corresponding indicators. Following paragraphs present an analytical review of selected EFA indicators highlighting gender differences in nine countries considered in this report as an evidence of unfinished task.

Within the context of EFA agenda, the importance of educating girls has been extensively researched and documented. It is also widely recognised that girls' education is one of the most effective means



of development not only for girls themselves but also for communities and wider society. Better girls' education raises maternal health, reduces child mortality, improves nutrition within the home, and increases the potential workforce and opportunities for economic growth.

Whilst this international and regional attention has led to improvements in some aspects of girls' education, much remains to be done to meet the goals of gender equality that Sub-Saharan African and the Asian Governments have committed to in education, from pre-primary to tertiary levels.

2.1.1 Pre-primary education: girls outpacing boys

The increasing evidence around the world has shown that at pre-primary schools, children become exposed to numbers, letters and shapes. And more important, they learn how to socialize—get along with other children, share and contribute. The learning capabilities of humans continue for the rest of their lives but not at the intensity that is demonstrated in the pre-school years.

In examining the progress in pre-primary education, it is important to keep in mind that pre-primary education is not compulsory and the notional age varies from one country to another. It is largely based in urban areas. There are countries (India, Nepal) where some pre-school education amount too little more than baby-sitting. At the same time, there are countries (China) where university-run programmes with high-quality curricula and trained teachers are common. Some are very resource rich, while others have very limited resources.

Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1 show that girls' participation in pre-primary education has been increasing steadily and gender parity in gross enrolment ratios (GERs) is strong at this level of education in all the countries except India (0.90) in 2014. However, the strategies laid down in the education development plans differ markedly from one country to another.

Table 2.1: Participation in Pre-Primary Education (Enrolment and Gross Enrolment Ratios: 2000–2014)

Country	INTERNAL EFFICIENCY PRIMARY EDUCATION COMPLETION											
	REPETITION				CUMULATIVE DROPOUT RATE TO THE LAST GRADE				SURVIVAL RATES TO LAST GRADE (%)			
	REPEATERS, ALL GRADES (%)											
	School year ending				School year ending				School year ending			
	2000		2014		2000		2013		2000		2013	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Cambodia	25.1	23.1	6.1	4.4	43.9	46.9	59.2	45.4	56.1	53.1	40.8	54.6
China	...	...	0.1	0.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Ethiopia	12.6	13.0	7.8	7.4	37.0	36.7	66.0	60.4	60.4	63.3	34.0	39.6
Ghana	5.1	4.8	2.7	2.6	39.2	42.0	14.9	17.7	60.8	58.0	63.0	82.3
India	4.2	4.1	2.2	2.1	40.8	41.3	...	...	59.2	58.7	85.1	...
Myanmar	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.2	44.7	44.8	...	...	55.3	55.2	72.2	77.5
Nepal	25.0	24.6	10.3	10.1	43.4	37.5	41.2	36.1	56.7	62.5	58.8	61.9
Sri Lanka	1.6	1.2	0.9	0.9	2.5	1.9	1.7	1.9	97.5	98.1	98.4	98.1
Uzbekistan	0.1	0.0	0.0	...	0.1	3.1	2.2	1.7	99.9	96.9	97.8	98.3

(Source: EFA/GMR 2015 and UIS Databank 2015–2016)

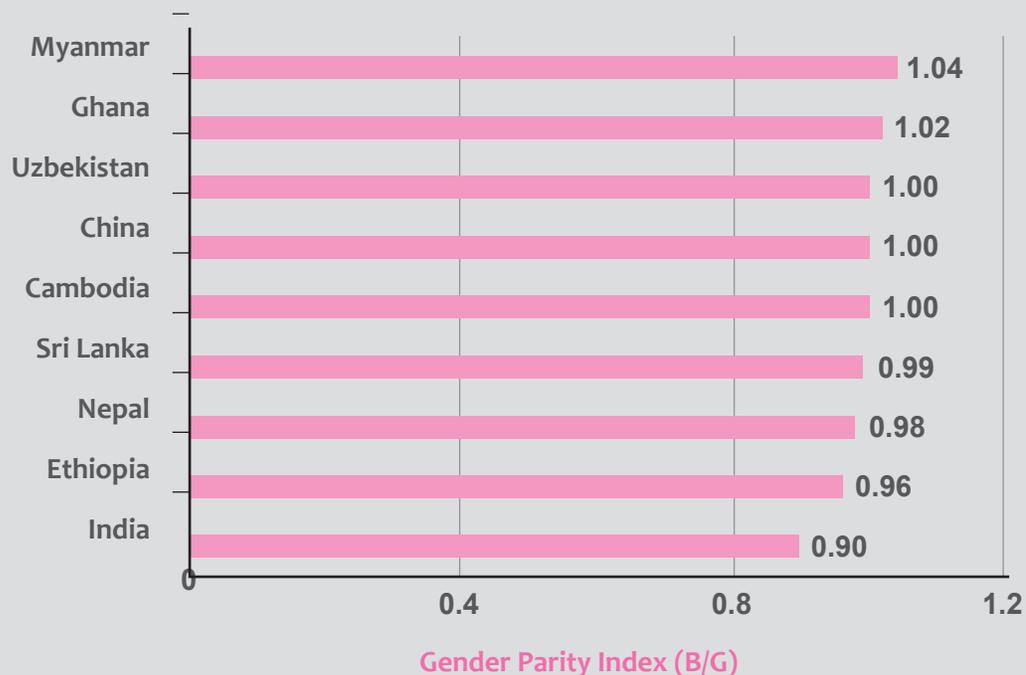


For instance, China's noticeable progress in achieving gender parity at pre-school level education is an outcome of its unique pre-school system which is based on the principles of mobilizing the whole society to develop pre-school education in various forms and channels and encouraging not only government institutions and enterprises but also mass organizations and individuals to open kindergartens. In urban areas of China, full-time kindergarten is the dominant form of pre-school education, with the boarding system and pre-school classes as a supplement; in rural areas where the local economy is better developed, central kindergartens can be found in every township and pre-school classes in every village. In backward countryside, mountain and pastoral areas, which are remote and sparsely populated, local communities are setting up children's activities stations, games-groups, mobile groups giving children guidance, and other non-regular forms of pre-school education.

In Uzbekistan, the current situation of pre-school education is disheartening (the Borgen Project: Education in Uzbekistan 2014). The Government of Uzbekistan does struggle with early childhood education. Only 20 percent of children aged 3 years old to 5 years old are attending pre-school, a figure that was much higher prior to independence. The limited access to pre-school and primary school for the 130,000 children with disabilities remains an area of primary concern.

Although methods such as home schooling are available for these children, they have proven insufficient in meeting the educational needs of this young population. There are few schools and teachers with the necessary supplies and training to deal with children with severe disabilities and learning difficulties.

Figure 2.1: PRE-PRIMARY: GIRLS OUTSPACING BOYS
(GPI for Gross Enrolment Ratio in Pre-Primary Education: 2014)



(Source: UNESCO-UIS Databank 2015–2016)



Whilst pre-primary enrolment has increased in all the countries since 2000, enrolment rates for girls remain the lowest in the world, at just 20% and 56% in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia respectively in 2012. There is very limited public provision for pre-school education in almost all the countries considered here.

Another important reason for the high level of parity in the earliest years of schooling is the wealthier and better-educated families who enrol their children in pre-primary schools, and such families are more inclined to value schooling for both boys and girls (Box 2.1). Such is certainly the case in situations where pre-school involves costs to the families (UNESCO-UIS: 2012).

Box 2.1 Sweden's Gender-Neutral Pre-School

Some have called it "gender madness", but the Egalia pre-school in Stockholm says its goal is to free children from social expectations based on their sex.

On the surface, the school in Sodermalm—a well-to-do district of the Swedish capital—seems like any other. But listen carefully and you'll notice a big difference. The teachers avoid using the pronouns "him" and "her" when talking to the children. Instead they refer to them as "friends", by their first names, or as "hen"—a genderless pronoun borrowed from Finnish.

Changing society?

It is not just the language that is different here, though. The books have been carefully selected to avoid traditional presentations of gender and parenting roles. So, out with the likes of *Sleeping Beauty* and *Cinderella*, and in with, for example, a book about two giraffes that found an abandoned baby crocodile and adopt it.

Most of the usual toys and games that you would find in any nursery are there—dolls, tractors, sand pits, and so on—but they are placed deliberately side-by-side to encourage a child to play with whatever he or she chooses.

At Egalia boys are free to dress up and to play with dolls, if that is what they want to do.

For the director of the pre-school, Lotta Rajalin, it is all about giving children a wider choice, and not limiting them to social expectations based on gender.

"We want to give the whole spectrum of life, not just half—that's why we are doing this. We want the children to get to know all the things in life, not to just see half of it," she told BBC World Service. All the staff are clearly passionate about this...

(Source: BBC News, 8 July, 2011 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-14038419>)



2.1.2 Primary education—close to achieving UPE and gender parity

In the primary education sub-sector, the period 2000–2015 has seen very rapid increases in enrolment for both boys and girls with the abolition of school fees in many countries and a strong emphasis on access from the MDG and EFA agendas. However, this influx often came at the expense of quality, and governments continue to face resource challenges as demand for, and access to, education rises.

The progress also masks huge country variations in girls' primary enrolment in 9 countries, with leaps in some countries. Girls' participation in total primary enrolment has risen dramatically in all the countries particularly in Ethiopia, India and Nepal—the largest increase being recorded by Ethiopia (8 percentage points) followed by India (6 percentage points) and Nepal (5 percentage points) between 2000–2014 (Table 2.2). Surprisingly, girls' participation in total enrolment decreased in China from 48% in 2000 to 46% (2 percentage points) in 2014. However, the Chinese EFA Report (2015) reports that the country has attained the goal of Universal 9-Year Compulsory Education as early as 2000 (China: 2015).

**Table 2.2: Participation in Primary Education
(Enrolment, Net Enrolment Ratios and Out-of-School Children: 2000–2014)**

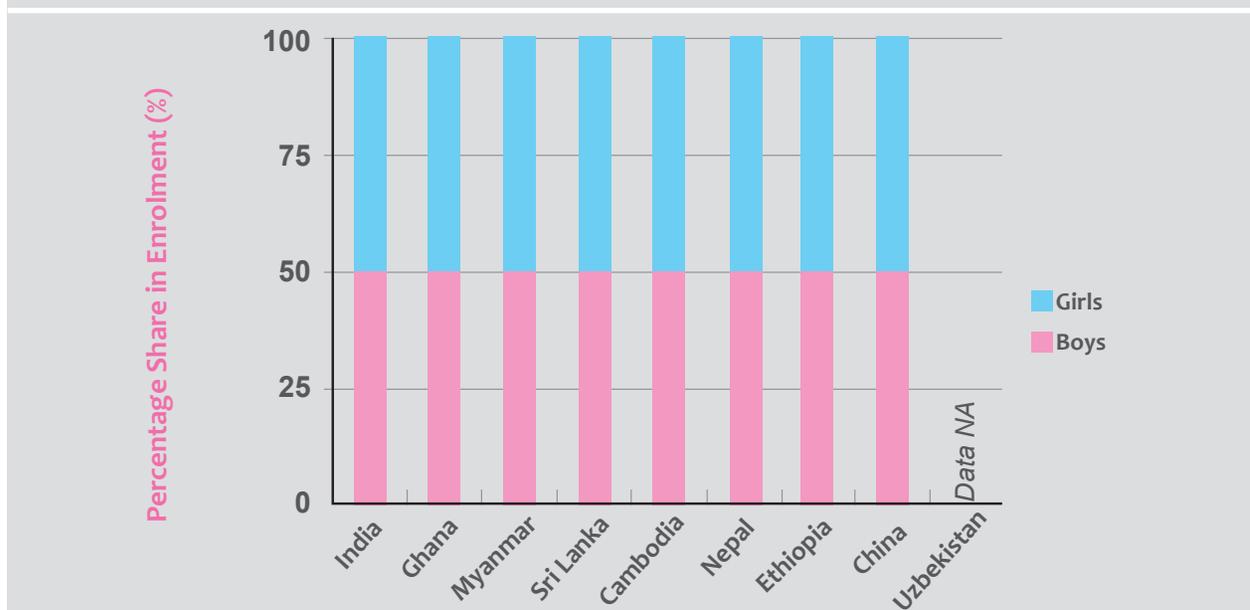
Country	Enrolment in Primary Education				Gross Enrolment Ratio (%)			Out-of-School Children ('000)			
	School year ending in							School year ending in			
	2000		2014		2014			2000		2014	
	Total (000)	% F	Total (000)	% F	Total	Fem.	GPI (F/M)	Total	%F	Total	%F
Cambodia	2,248	46	2,129	48	116	113	0.97	162	83	97	59
China	130,133	48	95,107	46	101	104	1.04	...	...	...	...
Ethiopia	5,847	39	15,773	47	100	96	0.96	6,413	55	2,123	60
Ghana	2,561	47	4,117	49	115	106	0.92	1,024	50	413	48
India	113,612	44	141,154	50	100	117	1.17	19,054	70	2,866	32
Myanmar	4,857	49	5,177	49	100	98	0.99	498	54	284	...
Nepal	3,780	43	4,577	48	135	141	1.04	861	63	174	55
Sri Lanka	1,768	49	1,767	49	101	100	0.99	200	...	47	23
Uzbekistan	2,602	49	...	...	97	96	0.99	...	...	...	...

(Source: EFA/GMR 2015 and UIS Databank 2015–2016)

In terms of the gross enrolment ratios, moderate progress has been made since 2000 towards gender parity (Figure 2.2). India, China and Nepal have so far achieved parity whereas all other countries are close to achieving this goal. The prospects of achieving the target of gender parity by 2020 therefore look promising in all the countries except Ghana where further concerted action for girls' education is urgently needed.



Figure 2.2: Primary Education: Close to Achieving Gender Parity (GPI for Primary Enrolment: 2014)

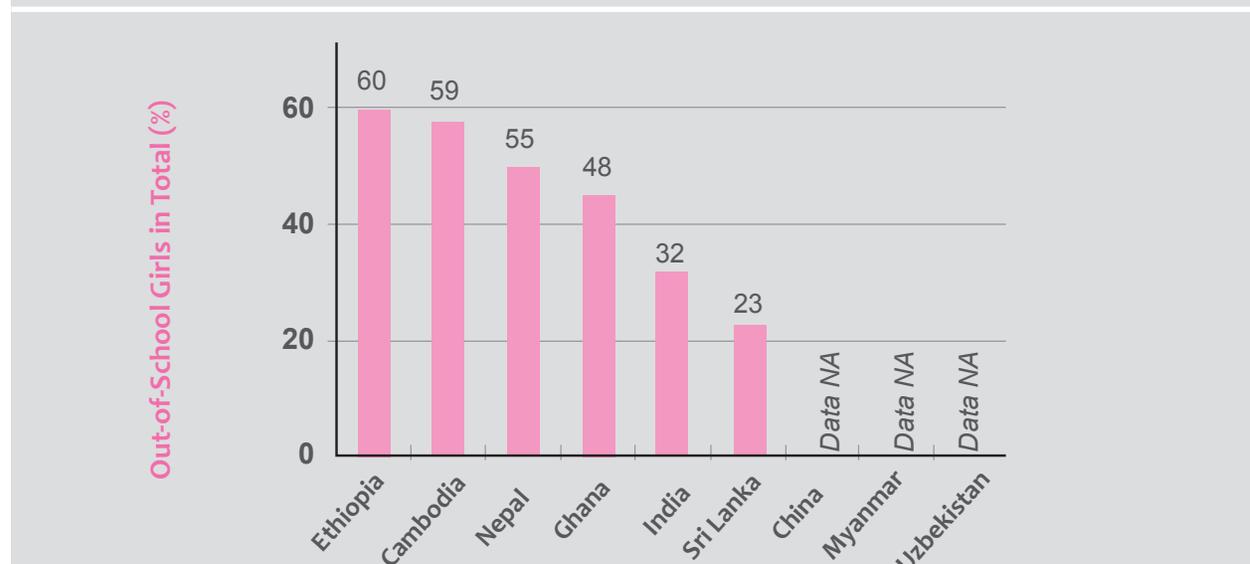


(Source: EFA/GMR 2015 and UIS Databank 2015–2016)

Despite these significant gains, millions of out-of-school children particularly girls continue to pose a serious threat to achieving UPE. Table 2.2 highlights a significant decline since 2000 in the number of out-of-school children in all the countries for which data are available. The fall in number is dramatic in India and Ethiopia—the largest decline of 16.2 million children being recorded by India. But there were still 2.9 million out-of-school children in India in 2014.

Figure 2.3 shows that in Ethiopia, Cambodia, and Nepal, out-of-school girls outnumbered boys significantly. Girls continue to represent 60%, 59% and 55% of the total out-of-school children in 2014 respectively.

Figure 2.3: Gender Parity in Primary Education is Still an Uphill Task (Percentage Share of Girls in Total Out-of-School Children: 2014)



(Source: EFA/GMR 2015 and UIS Databank 2015–2016)



The factors responsible making UPE a success and in reducing the gender disparity are diverse. For the 9 countries the key factors that emerge from the review include: strategic EFA Plans, inter-ministerial coordination, school readiness programme for children aged 5, health education programme, accelerated learning programme, community participation, mid-day meal programme, development of school infrastructure, increased budgetary allocations for rural schools, increased subsidies for pupils from rural and poor families and training and capacity building of rural teachers.

On the other side of the spectrum, the review also reveals that the main difficulty with trying to make primary education universally available in countries away from the goal of UPE in the two regions reside in capacity limitation, cultural factors (especially in the case of girls) and the direct and indirect costs of education, especially for the poorest social sectors.

2.1.3 School wastage: a key challenge

No doubt the most serious and harmful wastage is evident in the total of 58 million primary-school-age children who are not enrolled in school in 2014, of which girls account for 53% or 31 million .

Another, but less evident, form of wastage concerns the pupils who complete the primary cycle but fail to gain the intellectual, social, cultural and ethical knowledge and skills that schooling should provide. Surveys in industrialized and developing countries alike have found, for example, that a substantial proportion of children complete their primary-school education without acquiring even an adequate mastery of reading. Children who never gain access to school and those who enrol but do not attain an adequate level of learning constitute a tragic waste of the human, social and economic potential of the countries concerned.

Figures on enrolment and parity only go so far, however, in giving us a true picture of the state of girls' education. They cannot tell us which girls are enrolling, how long they stay in education or what they are learning whilst there.

Indeed significant progress has been made in increasing the number of pupils enrolled in school and in bridging the gender disparity in these 9 countries, yet the gains are undermined by the persistently large number of pupils who take more than one year to complete a particular grade and/or who drop out of school before completing even the primary cycle (Table 2.3). School wastage occurs when pupils have to repeat grades. In developing countries especially, this is often a prelude to dropout.



**Table 2.3: Internal Efficiency in Primary Education
(Repetition, Dropout and Survival to Last Grade: 2000–2013)**

Country	INTERNAL EFFICIENCY PRIMARY EDUCATION COMPLETION											
	REPETITION				CUMULATIVE DROPOUT RATE TO THE LAST GRADE				SURVIVAL RATES TO LAST GRADE (%)			
	REPEATERS, ALL GRADES (%)											
	School year ending				School year ending				School year ending			
	2000		2014		2000		2013		2000		2013	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Cambodia	25.1	23.1	6.1	4.4	43.9	46.9	59.2	45.4	56.1	53.1	40.8	54.6
China	...	...	0.1	0.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Ethiopia	12.6	13.0	7.8	7.4	37.0	36.7	66.0	60.4	60.4	63.3	34.0	39.6
Ghana	5.1	4.8	2.7	2.6	39.2	42.0	14.9	17.7	60.8	58.0	63.0	82.3
India	4.2	4.1	2.2	2.1	40.8	41.3	...	...	59.2	58.7	85.1	...
Myanmar	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.2	44.7	44.8	...	...	55.3	55.2	72.2	77.5
Nepal	25.0	24.6	10.3	10.1	43.4	37.5	41.2	36.1	56.7	62.5	58.8	61.9
Sri Lanka	1.6	1.2	0.9	0.9	2.5	1.9	1.7	1.9	97.5	98.1	98.4	98.1
Uzbekistan	0.1	0.0	0.0	...	0.1	3.1	2.2	1.7	99.9	96.9	97.8	98.3

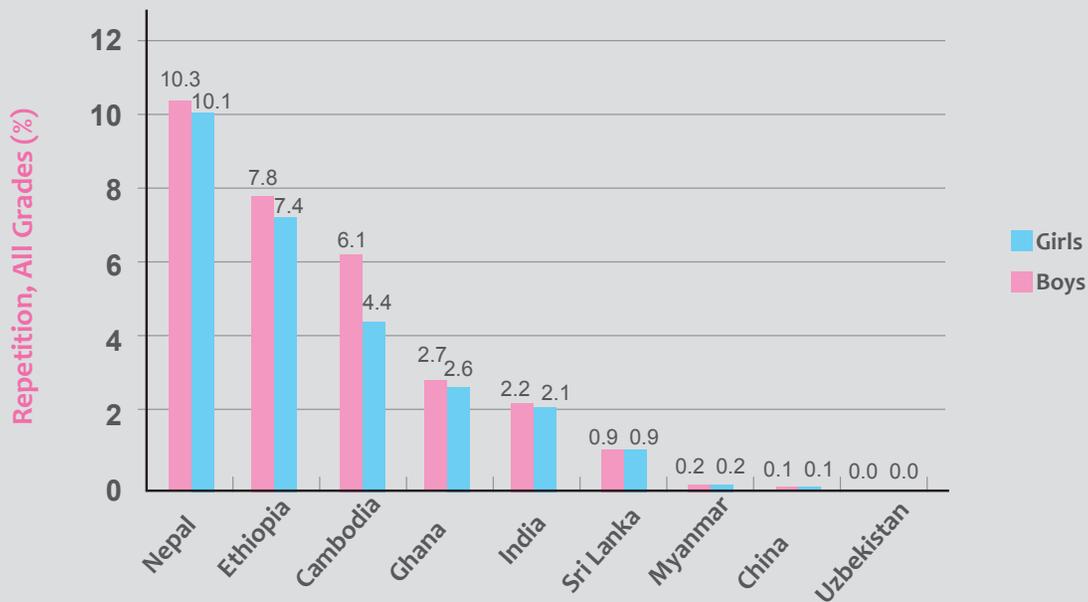
(Source: EFA/GMR 2015 and UIS Databank 2015–2016)

The global average for the proportion of pupils who repeat grades during their primary years is 4.9 percent—4.6 percent among girls and 5.2 percent among boys. But as seen in Figure 2.4, the proportions of girls in 2014 vary widely from one country to another. Uzbekistan, China and Myanmar have minimal percentages of less than 1 per cent, while Ghana, India, Cambodia, Ethiopia and Nepal have percentages between 2.2 per cent and 10.3 per cent. Repetition of grades is lowest in Uzbekistan and China.

Further, boys are far more likely than girls to be repeaters at the primary level in Nepal, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Ghana and India.



Figure 2.4: Scarce Resources Going Waste (Primary Education: Repeaters, All Grades by Sex (%) (2014)



(Source: EFA/GMR 2015 and UIS Databank 2015–2016)

A major obstacle to reaching the goal of UPE is the low survival rates that characterise these 9 countries. The causes of low survival and high dropping out, or “school wastage”, are mostly rooted in the overall social and economic environment and those that stem from the way the school system itself is organized and operates (UNESCO-UIS: 2012). Higher dropout rates, especially for girls, are seen in grade 1 and grades 4 and 5 and dropout patterns for girls vary across and within countries, with huge disparities between groups and regions, however, primary school dropouts increase with age in these countries.

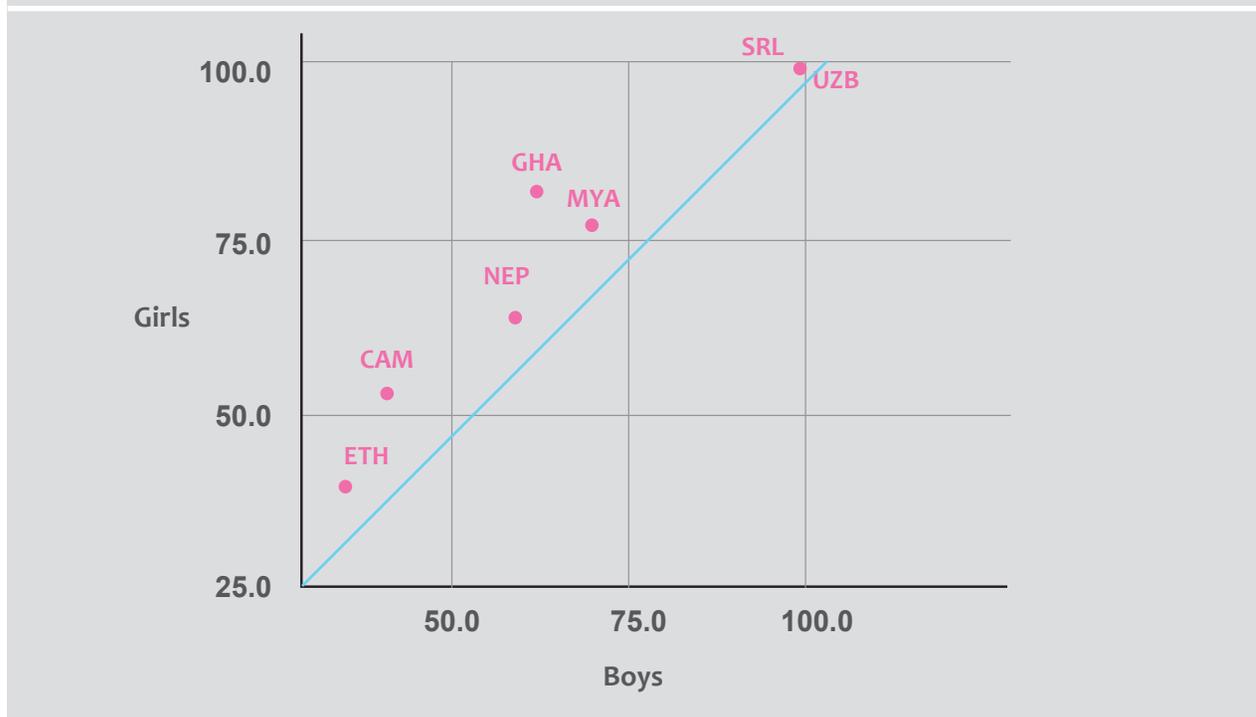
It is interesting to observe that survival rates for boys persist in school at slightly higher rates than do girls except in Ghana. Figure 2.4 shows that survival rates to last grade of primary education were almost 100% for both boys and girls in Uzbekistan and Sri Lanka. Girls’ survival rates outpaced boys’ rates in all countries. It should, however, be noted that in the remaining five countries shown in Figure 2.4, the survival rates for girls vary from 40% in Ethiopia to 82% in Ghana reflecting a large number of girls dropping out of the school system before completing the final grade of primary level of education—an evidence demonstrating the need to focus on more than just enrolment.

Across the Sub-Saharan African region, in 47 of the 54 countries girls actually have a less than 50% chance of completing primary school (UNESCO: 2011). Conflict and natural calamities have exacerbated this situation in both Ethiopia and Ghana.

Access to primary education in Uzbekistan was above average for the sub-region and region in 2008 (EFA/GMR 2008 and UNICEF: Uzbekistan Country Profile). In primary school, the net enrolment rate (NER) for both boys and girls is 97%, which is higher than the averages for the Central Asian sub-region—92%—and for the CEE/CIS Region—90%. The primary school net attendance rate (NAR) in Uzbekistan is 95.8%. The transition rate to secondary school is 100%, indicating that the gap in access between primary and secondary is not significant, unlike in many other countries in the region.



Figure 2.5: Scarce Resources Going Waste Primary Education: Survival Rates to Last Grade by Sex (%) (2013)



(Source: EFA/GMR 2015 and UIS Databank 2015–2016)

In summing up, there is no universal set of solutions to the problems of school wastage. Educators and policy-makers need first to identify the predominant causes of dropout and repetition, particularly of girls, in their particular situation and then devise appropriate solutions, which may need to target particular grades, geographical areas, communities, and disadvantaged groups. Such decisions will be more soundly based when a suitable data collection system is in place, which can then provide feedback once the corrective measures are under way.

2.1.4 Secondary education: girls catching up

Secondary education is a growing concern for the governments of Sub-Saharan African and South Asian countries—as access to primary increases, so does demand for secondary—and it represents a critical link between basic education and the labour market or higher education. Secondary school comes at a particularly vulnerable age for girls, as they transit into puberty (and thus child-bearing age) and into an age perceived suitable for work (inside or outside of the home); as such, their chances of staying in school reduce. In addition to the fundamental right to education, there is a strong argument for ensuring girls gain access to quality secondary education due to its positive impacts on girls’ ability to earn more income as adults, marry later, reduce their vulnerability to diseases such as HIV and AIDS and have fewer, healthier children (Plan: 2011).

Although the gains have not been as rapid as those at the primary level, all the 9 countries are making steady progress toward increased access to secondary education (Table 2.2). Although girls are catching up, some disparities still exist in Ghana and Cambodia in gross enrolment ratios at this level of education in 2014. In India, China and Nepal girls outpaced boys’ gross enrolment ratios in the same year.



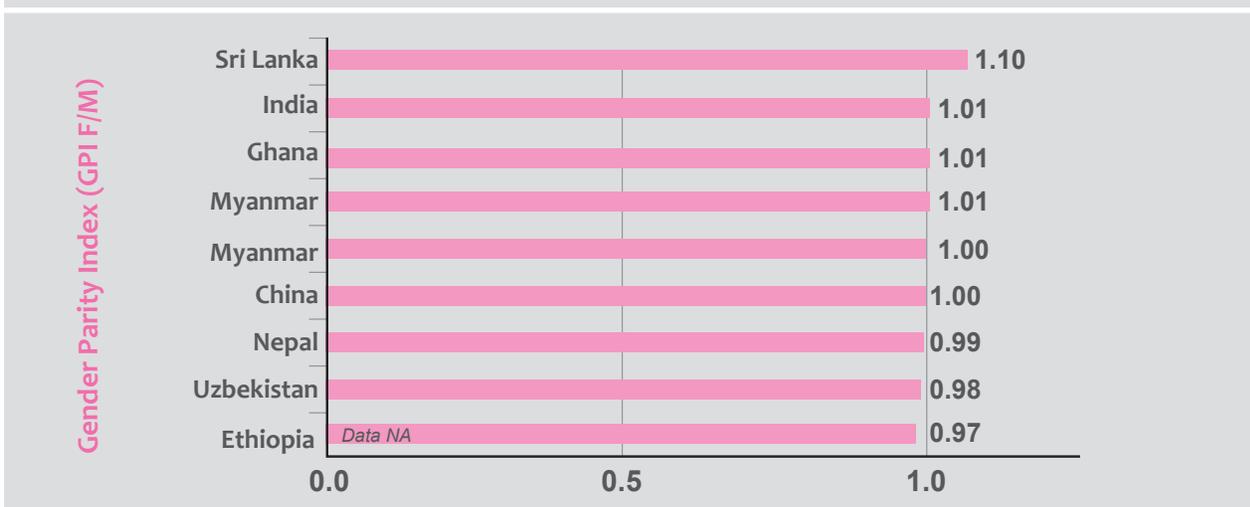
Table 2.4: Participation in Secondary Education
(Transition, Enrolment and Gross Enrolment Ratios: 2000–2014)

Country	TRANSITION FROM PRIMARY TO SECONDARY GENERAL EDUCATION (%)			TOTAL ENROLMENT SECONDARY EDUCATION ('000)				GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO (%) GENDER PARITY INDEX (GPI F/M)			FEMALE ENROLMENT IN TVE
	School year ending in 2013			School year ending in				School year ending in 2014			2014
				2000		2014					
	Male	Fem.	GPI (F/M)	Total	% F	Total	% F	Male	Fem.	GPI (F/M)	% F
Cambodia	76	84	1.10	351	35	...	...	...	...	...	...
China	100	100	1.00	81,487	...	88,692	47	93	95	1.02	45
Ethiopia	100	97	0.97	1,195	40	4,736	47	38	35	0.91	52
Ghana	88	89	1.01	1,056	44	2,266	47	69	65	0.94	29
India	92	92	1.01	71,030	40	119,400	48	69	69	1.01	17
Myanmar	77	77	1.00	2,268	51	3,191	50	51	52	1.03	...
Nepal	88	87	0.99	1,348	40	3,164	50	65	69	1.06	...
Sri Lanka	99	100	1.01	...	...	2,606	51	98	102	1.05	45
Uzbekistan	100	98	0.98	3,566	49	4,370	49	96	95	0.99	...

(Source: EFA/GMR 2015 and UIS Databank 2015–2016)

Figure 2.5 shows the parity index for transition from primary to secondary level of education in 2013. Six countries have parity index 1.00 or more suggesting increasing number of girls entering the secondary level of education after competing the first level of education. In Nepal, Uzbekistan and Ethiopia the indices were between 0.97–0.99 in 2013.

Figure 2.6: Transition from Primary to Secondary: Girls Out Spacing Boys: 2013
(Transition Parity Index)



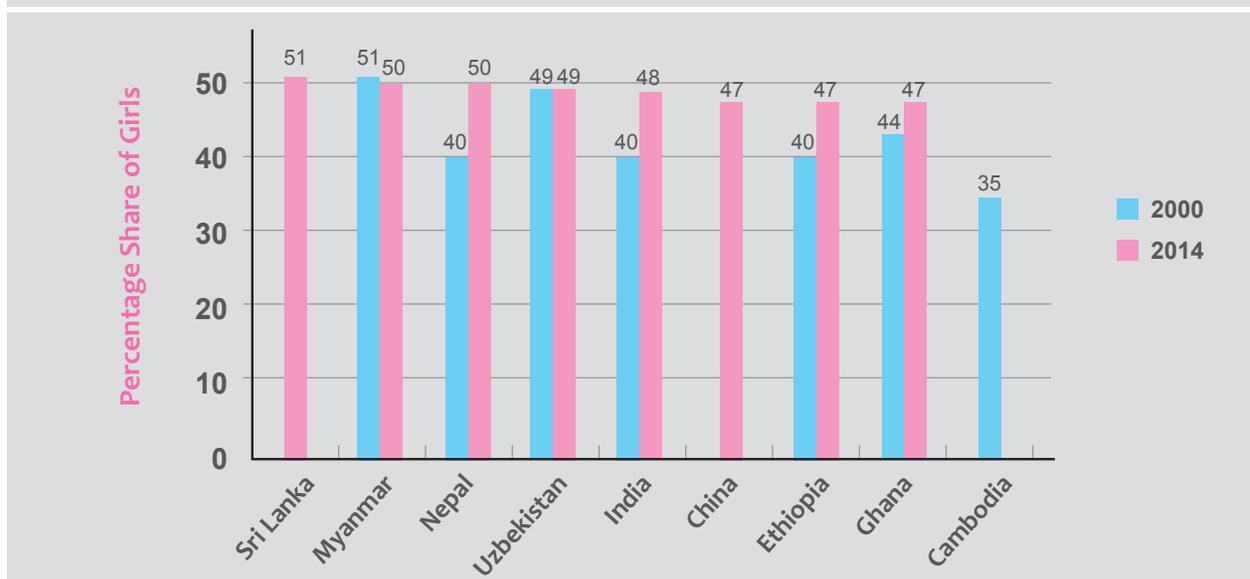
(Source: EFA/GMR 2015 and UIS Databank 2015–2016)



Figure 2.6 and 2.7 show that patterns of secondary enrolment around these countries reveal steady progress in girls' participation and hence marked reduction in gender disparity in Nepal, India and Ethiopia during the period 2000–2014 and in other countries girls are catching up.

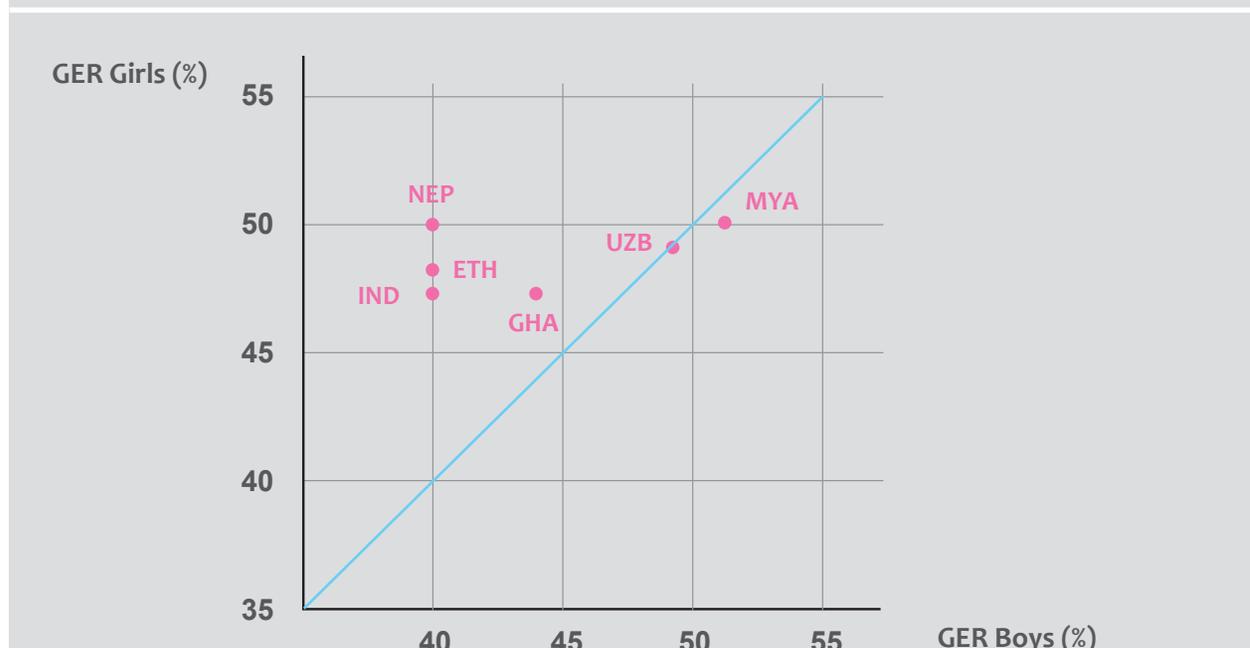
In Uzbekistan, the secondary school NER is 93.1%, which is the highest in the sub-region and among the highest in the region (EFA/GMR 2008). It is also encouraging to note that in Ethiopia, China and Sri Lanka, girls' share in technical and vocational education ranged from 31% to 50% with a steady increases since 2000 (Table 2.4).

Figure 2.7: Girls Share in Total Secondary Level Enrolment: 2000 and 2014



(Source: EFA/GMR 2015 and UIS Databank 2015–2016)

Figure 2.8: Gender Parity in GERs at Second Level of Education 2014



(Source: EFA/GMR 2015 and UIS Databank 2015–2016)



Among the nine countries lagging on girls' education at this level include both those that trail in educating all children and also countries in which women have historically been marginalized. But girls' education lags that of boys in some of these countries for an important reason: the interaction between gender and culture. In such countries girls who belong to marginalized groups, such as the economically weak population in the Western Provinces of China or the lowest castes in India and Nepal, suffer disproportionately in education relative to the mainstream population and to boys in their own linguistic or ethnic group.

2.1.5 Tertiary education: women the biggest beneficiaries

Gender inequality in tertiary education persists in India, Ghana, Cambodia and Ethiopia in 2014 (Table 2.5 and Figures 2.8 and 2.9). Even in other countries where gender parity has been achieved in tertiary education, gender streaming of females toward specific types of non-university institutions and/or toward specific disciplines leading to low-paying occupations is prevalent. The available evidence suggests that female over-representation persists in teaching institutes, nursing schools, and secretarial schools. Women are commonly over-represented in the humanities, while yet most often under-represented in subject areas such as agriculture, medicine, business, science and engineering programmes. Women are also underrepresented in leadership roles in tertiary education institutions (EFA/GMR 2015).

Though disaggregated data by sex at this level of education for Uzbekistan are not available, the EFA/GMR 2008 showed GERs at the tertiary education is the lowest in the sub-region and region with a 15% gross enrolment ratio.

Table 2.5: Participation in Tertiary Education (Enrolment and Gross Enrolment Ratios: 2000–2014)

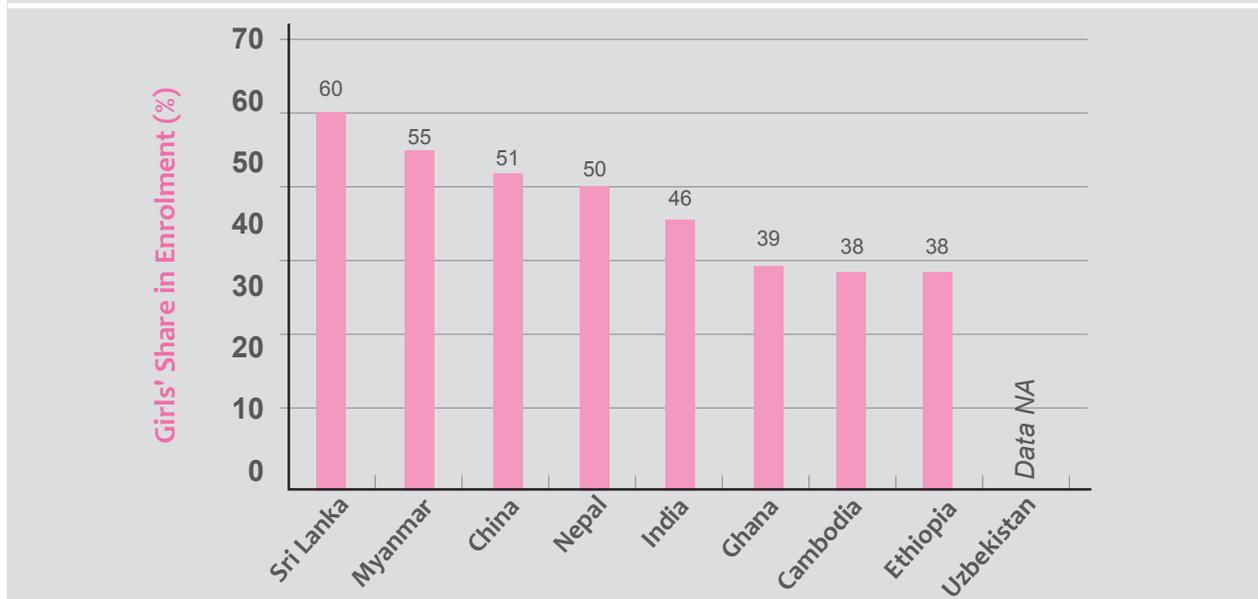
Country	Enrolment in Higher Education				GER, Tertiary, GPI (F/M)	
	2000		2014		2000	2014
	Total (ooo)	% F	Total (ooo)	% F	GPI (F/M)	GPI (F/M)
Cambodia	22,108	25	223,222	38	0.32	...
China	7,364,111	...	41,924,198	51	...	1.16
Ethiopia	67,732	22	757,175	32	0.28	0.48
Ghana	...	...	402,142	39	...	0.67
India	9,404,460	38	28,175,135	46	0.66	0.94
Myanmar	...	...	634,306	55	...	...
Nepal	94,401	28	458,621	50	0.37	0.82
Sri Lanka	...	...	323,866	60	...	1.49
Uzbekistan	305,409	43	...	...	0.81	...

It is at the tertiary education level where female enrolments have seen the greatest increases in almost all regions. Long-term trends show that all the countries are switching from an enrolment in favour of males to one in favour of females.



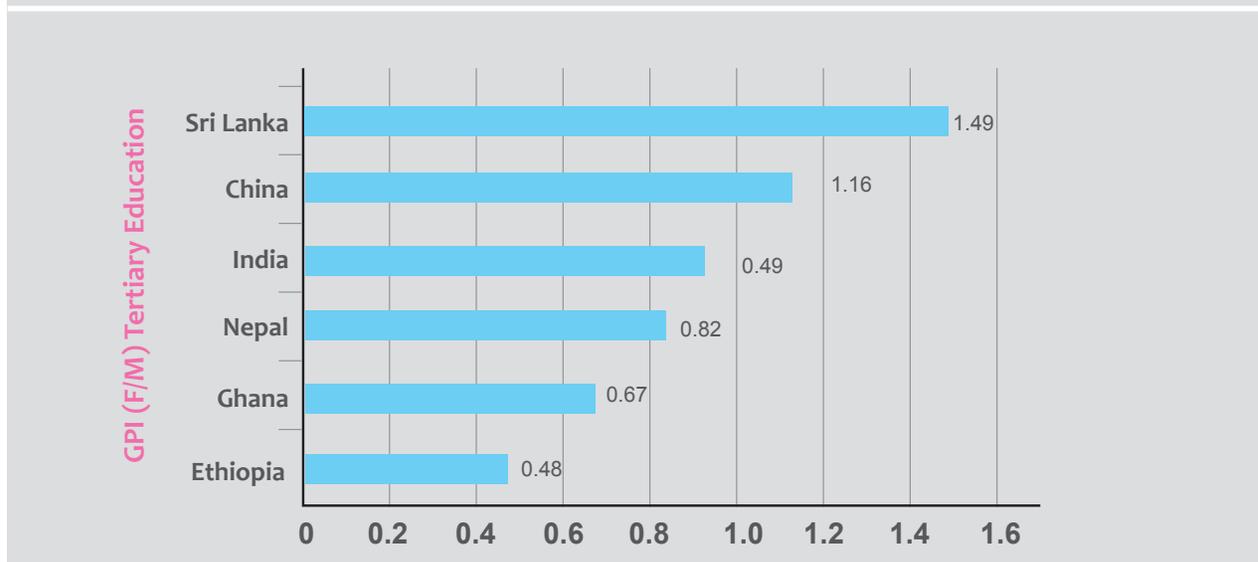
According to UNESCO-UIS, “although access to higher education remains problematic in many countries, the last four decades have brought a major expansion of higher education in every region of the world, and women have been the principal beneficiaries in all regions. Female enrolment at the tertiary level has grown almost twice as fast as that of men over the last four decades for reasons that include social mobility, enhanced income potential and international pressure to narrow the gender gap. Nevertheless, enhanced access to higher education by women has not always translated into enhanced career opportunities, including the opportunity to use their doctorates in the field of research (UNESCO-UIS: 2012)”.

Figure 2.9: Girls’ Share in Tertiary Level Enrolment: 2000 and 2014 (%)



(Source: EFA/GMR 2015 and UIS Databank 2015–2016)

Figure 2.10: Parity Index at Tertiary Level GERs: 2014



(Source: EFA/GMR 2015 and UIS Databank 2015–2016)



In summing up, it will not be unfair to say that despite progress in recent years, girls continue to suffer severe disadvantage and exclusion in education systems throughout their lives. Large shortfalls remain, especially in the South Asian and Sub-Saharan African countries studied in the report. The shortfalls tend to be greatest where poverty is severe, in remote areas, and in areas where girls and women are more socially secluded or where conflict persists. Millions more children, particularly girls, never reach secondary school, and transitioning girls to secondary school and keeping them there through graduation is a critical issue.

Gender differences are widest at the level of secondary education, where the acquisition of cognitive skills is crucial for national economic growth. Many children attending secondary school are failing to master the skills and competencies needed to succeed in today's labour market. Measured in terms of learning achievement, the quality of educational services in these countries remains low. Gender inequalities in both learning and earning outcomes persist.

2.2 Girls' education: untapped opportunities and persistent challenges

The persistent problem of the tens of millions of girls across the developing world who grow up without receiving the most basic education has attracted increased public attention in recent years. This crisis is acute in rural and poor areas of the Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Enhancing girls' access to education and training has long been recognized as a human right and development imperative, yet girls' vast potential for a nation's development has not been fully tapped. Studies carried out by UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, OECD and by others demonstrate that great power and opportunity lies within the community of girls. In order to unleash the power and opportunity that lies within each girl, international organisations, governments, civil society members, NOGs and experts in both developed and developing countries have turned to girls' access to education.

Despite such recognition of the potential of the world's millions of girls, and so many championing their access to education and training, evidence suggests that girls have not fully received the message. They hear repeatedly that a good quality education and training can be life-changing, helping them develop to their full potential and putting them on a path for success in their life, that, is allowing them to get jobs, earn income, care for their families, participate in their communities and local economies, and change the world. Unfortunately, "girls hear these messages but do not feel like they have the power to overcome the obstacles they can readily identify" (Soroptimist: 2014).

Whether viewed through the lens of public health policy, economic development or human rights and social justice campaigns, it is the teenage girl who is trumpeted today as "the world's greatest untapped solution" (Lawrence: 1994), as "the single highest return investment available," and as an "agent of change." Yet for all the data indicating progress in addressing gender gaps at the policy level, there is a statistical flipside showing pervasive inequality.

Girls face a number of constraints to accessing and benefitting from education. We know, for example, that as adolescent girls grow older, enrolment rates drop off—and this is particularly true in the poorest countries of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Economic, social and cultural barriers keep larger proportions of girls in poor countries out of school. Most of these are unimaginable to common people and often to policy makers in developing countries. The



studies carried out by IFAD (2005); Herz (2004 and 2005), and King and Winthrop (2015), among others, highlight the following key constraints and barriers to girls' education.

2.2.1 Cost of education

Educating girls is costly for families both socially and economically. These costs involve (i) tuition fees and other direct school fees; (ii) indirect fees (such as PTA fees, teachers' levies, and fees for school construction and building); (iii) indirect costs such as uniforms, and transportation); and (iv) opportunity costs (e.g. time could have spent working or helping family or lost household or paid labour). These costs often impact boys and girls differently. Many non-experimental studies using household survey data find that girls' schooling is more sensitive to cost, however defined, than is boys' schooling (Glick: 2007). Too often, parents choose to keep their girls at home and send the boys to school instead.

Opportunity costs make even free schooling unaffordable for some families. In Sub-Saharan African and South Asian regions, daughters are the victims of a self-fulfilling prophecy: traditionally, parents prefer that girls work to supplement household income, do household chores, or care for sick family members. In Sub-Saharan African countries afflicted by HIV and AIDS, children may stay out of school to care for sick parents or orphaned siblings. The opportunity cost of educating them seems higher and so they are kept home.

2.2.2 Poor school environments

Girls may face a poor and hostile school environment. While education should support girls to achieve the kinds of lives they value, girls' experiences of schooling rarely do this (Rao: 2012). Girls who stay in school often face poor conditions, a lack of resources, gender-insensitive environments, and gender bias school materials. A lack of appropriate sanitation facilities to deal with menstrual hygiene affects girls' attendance, leading to high levels of absenteeism, poor performance and dropout (Mannathoko: 2008). Called the "hidden curriculum", gender stereotypes can also be embedded in the content and methodology of education, as well as teachers' expectations of girls (Gunawardena and Jayaweera: 2008). In South Asia, particularly in India and Nepal, for example, girls are often not represented in textbooks, and teachers may compound this by asking girls (particularly those from excluded caste and ethnic groups) to make tea, wash cups, sweep floors and often (Narayan, Rao, and Khan: 2010) to work at their homes (Box 2.2)

Box 2.2 Mama Speaks ...

The vast majority of girls outside the school system are in families where mothers were themselves excluded from education. These mothers' involvement in helping their daughters to go to school is critical. I'll use an example to highlight what I mean: One young woman, Mama, who we are working with in Ghana to lead initiatives in support of girls, spoke earlier this year to the UK Chancellor, Gordon Brown, at an event organised by DFID on girls' education. The main point Mama chose to make was this:

"When you visit a school in Africa and you see that the most beautiful girl is receiving the bursary for education, you must ask yourself why. It is most likely because the girl is paying for her education through sex with the headmaster. It is very important that bursaries are given by the community and that girls and parents understand what they are entitled to."

(Source: Lucy Lake, Director of International Programmes, CAMFED Presentation to the UNGEI Technical Meeting UNGEI, Technical Consultation Meeting Beijing, China 26–27 November 2005.)



2.2.3 Weak position of women in society

Women have a weak position in society. Cultural, religious and social factors have a heavy influence on girls' participation rates in education. Frequently there is little recognition of the value of educating girls or women. Early marriages, adolescent pregnancy, the AIDS pandemic (Ethiopia and Ghana) and household responsibilities affect the likelihood that girls will remain in school. When barriers to women's participation in the workforce exist, such as lower wage rates and limited opportunities for employment, families may anticipate lower monetary returns on their investments for girls' schooling.

2.2.4 Conflict and school violence

Conflict hurts girls most. There were 4.8 million children between the ages of 6 and 15 years old living in conflict areas. More than half of these children are girls and all are out of school (Bent: 2013).

Violence during a conflict often extends into schools, especially towards female students and female teachers. Female students and teachers risk sexual violence, kidnapping, and general acts of violence inside and outside schools. Schools also risk burnings and explosions in conflict situations. These attacks are a result of various issues; some stem from cultural practices that do not encourage girls to go to school, others result from the generalized violence inflicted upon girls and women in conflict situations. Communities and families fear sending their daughters to school. Moreover, the threat of sexual violence prevents girls from attending school. If parents find out school is not safe for their daughters, they may remove them from school.

2.2.5 Social exclusion

Girls are disadvantaged because they are often excluded from the school system purely on the basis of caste, ethnicity, religion or disability. The countries lagging on girls' education in these two regions include both those that trail in educating all children and also countries in which women have historically been marginalized. But girls' education lags that of boys in some countries for a third reason: the interaction between gender and culture (Maureen and Marlaine: undated). In such countries girls who belong to marginalized groups, such as the ethnic minority women in highlands to the north-east of Cambodia, the Han community in China, Refugee adolescent girls in Ethiopia, Hill Tribes in Thailand, the lowest castes ("dalit") in India and Nepal suffer disproportionately in education relative to the mainstream population and to boys in their own linguistic or ethnic group.

In short, abject poverty, direct and indirect costs of education, shortages of qualified and trained quality female teachers, relevance of education and long distances to school, social exclusion of girls from ethnic minorities and migrant groups, low educational quality, weak institutional capacity, poor school conditions and location, overcrowded classrooms, lack of educational relevance, gender socialization, literature and textbooks that promote gender stereotypes, and violence in and around schools, inadequate infrastructure including water and sanitation facilities, pregnancy, early marriage, hostile learning environments and societal attitudes towards girls' education are the constraints hindering girls' participation and access to schooling.



2.3 Shaping Girls' Socialization within Schools

Research has revealed that social development of boys and girls depends on their family dynamics, individual personality and several other variables, but their experiences at school play the most influential role to socialization. If they attend a traditional school, they encounter countless peer interactions that contribute to their future social awareness. Teacher quality, school structure, friends and peers impact their socialization negatively or positively and differently for both boys and girls.

Family, schools and peers—the key agents of infant and young children—interact dominantly in their socialisation process. Infants and young children learn from the family setting about close relationship, group life and how to share resources, first system of values, norms and beliefs—a system that is usually a reflection of their own social status, religion, ethnic group and more (Stromquist: 2007). Is it really happening in a normal family these days? Certainly “not” in the way and form expected from the parents and other family members. The reasons of the flaw are well known and sufficiently documented. Parents and family members are socialising infants and young children in gendered ways without consciously following that path. Even parents who strive to achieve a less “gendered” parenting style unconsciously reinforce gender roles (Bhuiyan: 2007).

School as an agent of socialisation helps children learn skills to relate to different personality types. As they work through arguments on the playground or resolves disagreements with classmates, their negotiation skills, problem-solving abilities and self-control develop. School reinforces the concept that actions and choices have consequences. Girls in particular benefit from positive socialization experiences during pre-puberty and other transitions.

Are schools as an agent of socialisation performing these tasks? The answer is once again non-affirmative. In our schools in general and particularly in rural areas and for girls, socialization needs are not equipped with structures and interaction patterns in the classrooms which promote the utilization and development of student resources within the school setting. Teachers are untrained and hardly know the ways and means to develop and enhance among children individual talents as well as social responsibility, cooperation and tolerance through process of social exchange, observational learning and reinforcement.

It should, however, be noted, “if your child is stressed by harmful actions of a school bully or experiences of frequent conflicts, his socialization experience can deteriorate quickly. His teacher influences his socialization as well. While some encourage positive peer interactions, some discourage classroom socialization. If he is sent to the office frequently, loses recess privileges or experiences other punishments, his socialization suffers. If his school cut back on recess to increase instructional time, his opportunities for socialization might be negatively impacted even more” (Pearson: 2016).

Finally, peer groups, as agent of socialisation, give children an opportunity to form relationships with others on our own terms, plus learn things without the direction of an adult. Since peers have an incredible amount of influence on young children, quite often parents worry about the type of friends particularly girls choose (India and Nepal, for instance). The Second PROBE Report (Public Report on Basic Education) in India, for instance, reveals that primary school girls learn behavioural norms from their peers that parents do not approve of.



However, peers also give children a chance to develop many of the social skills they need as adults. The above report also shows that girls certainly experience moments when their friends' behaviour and/or values contradict the norms and values they obtained from the family. Girls have to learn to decide which norms and values to keep, reject, or use and follow in certain situations.

Looking at the whole system of functioning of schools, it seems like schools are the factory of creating patriarchy. When we are talking of equality among genders, creating policy and law to uphold equality, how can we talk about all these without looking at our present: the children and their social process of learning. Can we really bring equality among genders through laws and policy without looking at changes in the basis of learning? (Perason: 2016)

In the past, the emphasis of socialisation of children was on molding the young in the image of the older generation by transmitting the cultural heritage and by reinforcing traditional behaviour as was prevalent in China and India. The present process of socialisation in schools emphasises on orienting the child toward the standards of membership and role performance in his/her current groups, such as the family, age group and the classroom. For developing the knowledge society for the future, developing countries will have to evolve within schools, the socialization process that will help in preparing both boys and girls, without any gender discrimination, for the anticipated requirements of future role, groups and transitions (Stromquist: 2007).

2.4 Fostering a Gender-Equitable and Inclusive Ethos

As early as 1992, Grant Wiggins wrote the following about the value of diversity:

“We will not successfully restructure schools to be effective until we stop seeing diversity in students as a problem. Our challenge is not one of getting “special” students to better adjust to the usual schoolwork, the usual teacher pace, or the usual tests. The challenge of schooling remains what it has been since the modern era began two centuries ago: ensuring that all students receive their entitlement. They have the right to thought-provoking and enabling schoolwork, so that they might use their minds well and discover the joy therein to willingly push themselves farther. They have the right to instruction that obligates the teacher, like the doctor, to change tactics when progress fails to occur. They have the right to assessment that provides students and teachers with insight into real-world standards, useable feedback, the opportunity to self-assess, and the chance to have dialogue with, or even to challenge, the assessor—also a right in a democratic culture. Until such a time, we will have no insight into human potential. Until the challenge is met, schools will continue to reward the lucky or the already-equipped and weed out the poor performers” (Wiggins: 1992).

Schools are microcosms of society. Attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviour of learners (conscious or unconscious) develop in schools which in turn have a profound impact on educational policies, practices, leadership styles and underlying assumptions that shape school culture. Whether the school is located in an urban area or rural area or it is a public or private entity, creating an equitable and inclusive learning place—where the principles of respect, safety, accessibility, and equality of opportunity apply without any prejudice and discrimination to the overarching structure and everyday functioning of a school—is essential to fostering children’s wellbeing and community prosperity (Box 2.3).



Box 2.3 Progress on gender equality in education in the UK

Until the 1960s, many British girls were directed towards the commercial and technical streams in secondary school, and did not acquire qualifications for higher paying employment. Until the mid-1980s, for instance, it was still relatively unusual for girls to do well in or continue studying subjects such as mathematics or science to university level. However, the 1990s saw a sharp rise in girls' performances at school. This has been linked to a range of factors, including families' prioritisation of their daughters' education, a shift in perceptions of gender linked to the women's movements in the 1960s and 1970s, government policies on comprehensive schools, promoting further education and reform of the exam system and gender equality strategies in local education authorities and schools. Policies such as, areas in schools just for girls, strong anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies, and the promotion of science and mathematics for girls were put in place. In addition, growth in the service sector facilitated demand for girls in the labour market. Currently there is concern about why improved academic performance for girls has not translated into equality in employment opportunities and earning power.

(Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. 2004, Office of National Statistics, UK.)

For Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education (2010), an inclusive approach to education involves: (i) creating an ethos of achievement for all pupils within a climate of high expectation; (ii) valuing a broad range of talents, abilities and achievements; (iii) promoting success and self-esteem by taking action to remove barriers to learning; (iv) countering conscious and unconscious discrimination that may prevent pupils from any particular groups, from thriving in the school; and (v) actively promoting understanding and a positive appreciation of the diversity of individuals and groups within society. The approach supports school environment that accepts children from all walks of life who they are and the uniqueness they bring, that accommodates diverse needs and that allows children to perform at their best (Box 2.4). Within the context of achieving EFA goals in the developing countries, particularly in the context of access to schooling, especially of excluded children from the marginalised and disadvantaged population groups, quality and equity, creation and fostering of inclusive schools is the key to cultivating a more motivated and innovative learning environment in schools. It is disheartening to see that the concept of inclusive education is not yet put into practice the way defined in the Salamanca Statement of Action on Special Needs Education.

“Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all, moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system—The Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education (2012).



Box 2.4 Finland—Special needs education within the education system

Inclusion has developed in Finland as follows:

Separate curricula of special education have been abolished and all pupils use the same curriculum individualised by individual education plans. In the curricula, the concept 'need for special support' will be used when referring to special education.

- The pupil welfare services are included in the curriculum, and municipalities and schools are obliged to include the services they offer in the curriculum.
- Development of inclusion and production of models regarding municipality, school and pupil-level planning, organisation and implementation of inclusive special needs education in co-operation with various interest groups.
- The statistics on provision, resources and costs of special needs education will be drawn upon in order to obtain a continuous view on the state of special needs education nationwide, as well as to acquire comparative data on the effects of regional and municipal differences.
- Several projects are developing the virtual school for special education needs according to the national strategy. The actors in these projects represent private and public sector, state, municipalities, universities and research centres, both in the humanities and technical areas.
- There are several projects for preventing exclusion of pupils by developing productive learning models and models to teach and support pupils with mental illnesses.

The strategy stresses the central role of teachers. Developing inclusive education requires heavy investments in teacher education. In Finland, teachers have been trusted to do their best as true education professionals. From this it has followed that Finnish teachers have been entrusted with considerable pedagogical independence in the classroom and that schools have likewise enjoyed substantial autonomy in organising their work within the limits of the national core curriculum.... The 'teachership' of the future means the ability to teach heterogeneous groups, readiness to actively participate in discussions concerning the direction of education and society and the will to work for development.

(Source: European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education)

In developing countries, efforts are underway to integrate an inclusive approach primarily for meeting the learning needs of excluded children and for tackling gender differences as part of the institution's general ethos. Not only students with disabilities, but also all students, educators, parents, and community members are benefitting from inclusive education. Experience shows that as communities and schools embrace the true meaning of inclusion, they become better able to change a segregated special education system into an inclusive service delivery system and to change a society and world intolerant and fearful of difference into one that embraces and celebrates natural diversity with meaningful, student-centred learning. The underlying premise of inclusive education and inclusive schools is commitment to belonging, nurturing and educating all students regardless of their differences in ability, culture, gender, language, class and ethnicity (UNESCO: 2009 and Kozlesk: 2011).



Child Friendly Schools in Cambodia, for instance, aim at promoting awareness in schools, families and communities of their roles and responsibilities for providing equal and equitable education and educational opportunity for both girls and boys so that they can participate equally in all activities in school, family and society.

In China, the Government promotes a more inclusive approach to education but it does not aim at deconstructing the existing special education system entirely. The government still plans to maintain the existing special education schools as resource centres that provide Inclusive Education in China, education for the students with profound special education needs, and supports the regular schools in including the majority of students with special education needs. This Mainland Chinese approach to inclusive education, that emphasises the roles of both special education and mainstream schools, is often described by slogan *Yí tèshū jiàoyù xuéxiào wèi gǔgàn, yǐ suǐbān jiùdú hé tèjiào bān wéi zhǔtǐ* (Special education school as backbone, learning in regular classroom as main body) (PRC: 2011). In China's National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010–2020), the government also provides concrete guidelines for implementing its strategy of inclusive education. One concrete goal in this influential document is to ensure that by 2020 every prefecture, prefecture-level city, and county of more than 300,000 residents has at least one special education school.

In Ethiopia, the German Church School (GCS) provides a model of full inclusion of vision-impaired students in mainstream classes. GCS offers a preparatory class for new vision-impaired students in which they learn reading, writing, life skills and mobility training, after which they are included in the classroom with their sighted peers. GCS provides small stipends through “fosterhips”. The school's vision is to give these students “the chance to receive a good education and thereby give them a future in which they can take responsibility for themselves”. The existence of a preparatory class and the encouragement of full inclusion in mainstream classrooms are important aspects of this programme's success.

In India, a majority of children with special needs do not receive any formal education, in spite of the practice of inclusive education in some schools. This is because children with disabilities and learning deficiencies are segregated from mainstream schools and other regular routines and social activities of normal children. Other contributing factors to this situation are lack of affordability and awareness on the kind of education choices available to children with special needs.

The Heritage School located in Kolkata (India) run by NGO, is well known for its inclusive education philosophy where children's special needs are combined with the mainstream children to encourage overall improved student learning. The school has created a need-based programme with its educators to focus on its special students to allow them to discover their own skills and work on them to catch up with their peers. There are also private schools in the country that offer individualised learning programmes for children with special needs.

Several initiatives have been undertaken by the Nepalese Government to provide integrated and inclusive education for children with disabilities by the Department of Education, charity organizations, religious institutions, local NGOs and international organizations. However, there is little documentation of such initiatives (UNICEF: 2003).



The well-known Daleki School run by the Vicki Educational and Development Foundation Nepal strives to ensure holistic development of the child by providing free tuition, lunch, books, uniform, stationery, and medical care, hostel accommodation for orphan children, and special facilities and materials for children with disabilities. The school has its own medical room with professional medical staff, and is equipped with up-to-date medical supplies donated by contributors to the project. The psychological sense of security is provided by the positive and caring attitude of the administrators and teachers; this is essential for achieving holistic development of children with disabilities. The school applies a child-centred teaching and learning approach. It follows an active pedagogy using methods that consider the child to be at the central axis of the learning process. It has taken measures to support disabled children, slow learners and non-disabled children to learn at their own pace within the same classroom.

In summary, tackling gender differences that have a negative impact on educational achievement is best done at a whole school level as part of institution's general ethos. There are many opportunities for pupils to become engaged in the life of the school, and the school is keen to ensure that individual pupils become involved. Values and aims need to be transparent, consistent, shared by colleagues and pupils, and permeate all the work of the school.

Linking inclusion in education to values, as reasons for action, is a challenge to those who see education purely as a technical concern, linked to economic efficiency. It helps to see that there are alternative ways to pursue educational development and places responsibility on donor organisations to justify the particular approach to education that they promote.

CHAPTER THREE:

WELCOMING SCHOOLS FOR GIRLS

“What would men be without women? Scarce, Sir, mighty scarce.”

Mark Twain

3.0 Gender Discrimination—Show them the Way

Researchers suggest that in schools gender bias and the problems associated with it are socially and culturally constructed (Watson, Hamilton, and Harper: 2013). Cultural and societal practices affect children in schools, especially the way they look at their peers of the opposite sex. Cultural beliefs and societal structures play major roles in how children are raised and how they differentiate between the powers given to men versus those allocated to women. Increasing concern has been expressed about the role of the formal education system in reproducing gender differences and inequalities particularly since the early 1990s.

Gender discrimination is pervasive in our schools. It manifest in (i) parental and family attitudes (ii) institutional practices; (iii) segregation in school, and (iv) gender biased school practices.

From the beginning of life, and even before, the actions of parents begin to perpetuate gender roles. Young children are biologically and sociologically made aware of the differences between boys and girls and males and females (Mullins: 1998). Children are bombarded with images of femininity and masculinity through television, actions of peers, family, literature, and teachers. These images may be intentional or unintentional. Both family and society often put strict definitions of masculine and feminine roles and actions. This in turn fosters strict expectations for children, according to their sex; males are socialized to be masculine and females are socialized to be feminine (Marinova: 2003).

Gender bias is insidious because it can be almost invisible. But studies point out that the classroom setting reproduces gender inequality. From elementary school through higher education, girl students receive less active instruction, both in the quantity and in the quality of teacher time and attention (Elizabeth and Rebecca: 2015). Teachers often discriminate against girls, unaware that they are doing so. Discrimination often arises out of ignorance and deeply ingrained way of thinking related to common sense assumptions. Though it is difficult to identify the overt and covert forms of gender discrimination, but there is no denial that the gender bias in classroom practices, particularly in teacher-student interactions and student-student interactions continues to persist in schools in these 9 countries.



Research carried out in recent years in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia by the international community (UNESCO, UNICEF, UNGEI, DFID, NGOs (for example, MANUSHI's Public Report on Basic Education India, Care, Save the Children, etc.) demonstrate a visible form of "gender segregation" inside the classroom and school specifically in rural areas. Girls are segregated from boys in seating arrangement, school assemblies (prayer session), lunch breaks, before and after school activities, punishment to girls "speaking" to boys, etc. Sex segregation both during play activities and in the classroom polarizes the sexes and contributes to female invisibility. Well meaning teachers often protect girls by this separation when, in fact, they encourage stereotypical pattern of passivity in girls and aggression in boys (UNGEI: 2011). Healthy inter-gender socialization based on mutual understanding is crucial in gender equality.

In light of such discriminatory settings in the family, society, and in and outside our schools, the question that comes to our mind is: How can our schools create a warm and welcoming sense of community? From the outside it may look like this happens organically, but those involved in our schools know, it actually takes a lot of dedicated people working in concert to create and sustain vibrant and unique learning environments—a welcoming and girl-friendly school environment.

Research has shown when schools create a welcoming environment, schools become inviting places where students want to learn, school employees want to work and every citizen feels respected and valued. The school belongs to its customers, and it depends on public support for its ultimate success. Educators owe it to students to allow all learners—boys and girls—the same opportunities, both educationally and socially.

Creating welcoming environments in schools—an environment that facilitates the creation of fully inclusive, respectful and supportive learning for all students and their families—is the number one factor in encouraging parent involvement. It is not necessary to create new programmes or workloads but our focus should be on the customer service aspects of what schools are offering and what we are doing for promoting girls' education in our communities.

How do schools and diverse families form partnerships that support and enhance student learning without being gender biased? How do teachers care deeply about students and welcome diverse families as partners? How do the various "communities" in our school—students, teachers, administrators, admissions teams, advancement officers, parents, and more—collaborate to create a space where girls feel safe, valued, and appreciated? How does our school resolve conflict when any one of these voices is perceived to overshadow others?

This chapter seeks to answer these key questions. It identifies an instructional policy framework for parents, teachers, educators and administrators how to properly handle issues in girls' education in the family, in school and classroom and outside the school. It is important that these key agents recognize where issues in girls' education develop, how are they perceived, what measures be used to eliminate them and the responsibility they have in addressing these issues in schools.



3.1 Girls' Education—What Works to Improvement?

“Countries with the lowest standards of living and the highest rates of illiteracy are usually countries that do not educate their girls. Left unchecked, these inequalities in education will perpetuate violence, poverty and instability and will keep nations from achieving economic, political and social progress. Further, the lack of access to education can follow a girl for a lifetime; of the more than 700 million illiterate adults in the world, two-thirds are women”, says Ambassador Melanne Vermeer.

Of the 58 million primary-aged children not in school, 53 percent are girls, roughly three-quarters live in Sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia. Tens of millions more children drop out of school before grade five because schools are overcrowded, unsafe, poorly equipped, poorly managed and have inadequately trained teachers. If current trends continue, countries that have not yet achieved universal primary enrolment will fail to do so by 2020.

Standing between these girls and the classroom are gender biases, barriers, and power dynamics that limit girls' prospects for learning, growing and fully contributing to society. Barriers in girls' education, noticed in Chapter two, may be related to gender, race, ethnic origin, religion, socio-economic background, physical and mental ability, violence, sexual orientation, or other factors. It is now recognized that several factors may intersect to create additional barriers for some girl students.

Girls in developing countries face unique challenges. A girl is far more likely to miss out on school, marry too young and grow up too fast. Her childhood lost. Her life and future are at risk. That is why we have to do whatever it takes to ensure girls grow up healthy, learning and safe. Barriers and biases, whether overt or subtle, intentional or unintentional, need to be addressed.

It should, however, be noted that treating girls equally in schools is not just a matter of following the law. It also means avoiding subtle, often unconscious, discrimination in the classroom. A given school could be completely legal but it might not be overall doing a job for girls as for boys. Similarly, it is not illegal for a teacher to pay more attention to boys in the classroom. Nor is it illegal for a counsellor to unintentionally steer girls and boys toward different occupations. But in reality these actions are discriminatory all the same. Even the best teachers, fully supportive of equal treatment for girls, fall into the trap of favouring boys in the classroom. We socialize boys from the time that they are practically born to assert themselves. In contrast, girls are often socialized to "be quiet and not demand attention".

There is ample research evidence suggesting effective ways to offset the barriers to girls' education and to improve their education. For instance, in the book from the Centre for Universal Education at Brookings, “What Works in Girls' Education”, authors Gene Sperling and Rebecca Winthrop (2015) have collected a comprehensive body of evidence on why and how to improve girls' education around the world. Barbara Herz in her paper “Education Girls: What Works” published in E-Journal, USA (2011) outlines strategic interventions to support girls' education. DFID study (2005) “Girls Education: towards a better future for all”, outlines how its funding has helped the developing countries in promoting children education, particularly girls. Finally, Krishnaratne, White, and Carpenter (2013) in the Working Paper 20 “Quality education for all children? What works in education in developing countries?” suggests strategic interventions to meet growing demand for better evidence of what works, why, how and at what financial cost and to fill evidence gaps.



The following paragraphs draw on their work and similar other works carried out by UNESCO, UNICEF, DFID, UNGEI, ILO and national and international NGOs to help policy makers and education administrators promote girls' education. The section shows what works in getting children, particularly girls, into school in developing countries, keeping them there, and ensuring that they learn whilst they are there in the school. The discussion that follows focuses on the DFID's "Essential Elements of Quality Education for Girls" (Box 2.5) within the context of 9 countries under consideration.

Box 3.1 Essential elements of quality education for girls

- **Schools:** is a school within a reasonable distance; does it have proper facilities for girls; is it a safe environment and commute; is it free of violence? If not, parents are unlikely to ever send their daughter to school.
- **Teachers:** is there a teacher; are they skilled; do they have appropriate teaching materials? Is it a female teacher? Are there policies to recruit teachers from minority communities? If not, girls may not learn as much at school and drop out.
- **Students:** is she healthy enough; does she feel safe; is she free from the burden of household chores or the need to work to supplement the family income; is there a water source close by? If not, she may never have a chance to go to school.
- **Families:** does she have healthy parents who can support a family; does her family value education for girls; can her family afford the cost of schooling? If not, economic necessity may keep her at home.
- **Societies:** will the family's and the girl's standing in the community rise with an education; will new opportunities open up? If not, an education may not be in the family's interest.
- **Governments:** does the government provide adequate resources to offer sufficient school places; do salaries reach the teachers; do teachers receive quality training; is the government drawing in other agencies to maximise the provision of schooling; is there a clear strategy and budget based on the specific situation faced by girls? If not, the conditions above are unlikely to be fulfilled.
- **Donors:** are donors supporting governments to provide adequate resources; do donors contribute to analysing and addressing the challenges girls face; are donors conscious of local customs and traditions; are donors prioritising the countries' needs rather than their own agendas or existing programmes? If not, governments may simply not be in a position to provide a reasonable chance for all girls to get a quality education.



3.2 Interventions to Improve Girls' Education

There are still many poor countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia which missed most of the MDGs set for 2015. UPE appears to be out of reach. School attendance, especially for girls, is far from universal, and many children drop out of school before completing their primary education. Many children who do attend school receive an inadequate education because of poorly trained, underpaid teachers, overcrowded classrooms, and a lack of basic teaching tools such as textbooks, blackboards, and pens and paper.

The problem is that governments lack either the financial resources or the political will to meet their children's educational needs. In response, poor parents in economically impoverished low-income countries pay for their children's education themselves. It is true that school fees and other user payments are a heavy burden for some parents to bear. But, given the alternative—children receiving no education at all—such payments can represent a temporary, if less than ideal, solution to the problem.

In fact, the poor countries have been facing three key challenges: (i) reaching-the-unreached – getting all out-of-school children into primary education: notably girls and those in hard-to-reach areas; (ii) ensuring retention of those completing primary education stay on for secondary education; and (iii) ensuring that all those in school have an opportunity to learn. Only when these challenges are met will the UN's vision of quality education for all be achieved (Krishnaratne, White, and Carpenter (2013).

Given the evident benefits of a basic education, why do so many girls and boys in so many developing countries fail to get one? Following the demand-supply principles of economic theory, a shortage of goods or service, weak political commitment and lack of leadership qualities at all levels of education administrative hierarchy result in failure to children's access and participation in schools.

We present in the following paragraph the key strategic interventions which research studies and practices on ground have found effective in promoting the girls' education.

3.2.1 Building and strengthening political leadership

For the interventions to promote girls' education to be a success, strong and committed leadership is vital. UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, DFID and similar other entities have been supporting governments in their efforts to create political leadership for women's empowerment. Heads of governments and women leadership, for instance, in China (Women Federation), Ethiopia, India (Mahila Smakhya) and Sri Lanka have advocated strongly in support of girls' education (DFID: 2005).

Leadership is equally important within communities and within schools. Teachers are no more seen as teachers but as "facilitators" and "catalysts". They can encourage girls to school and provide them with educational experience of good quality. This impact increases as more female teachers enter the profession.

The role that community leaders play in promoting girls' education is unquestionable. Not only they can inform parents and children of their rights to an education, they can also reflect local demand for girls' education and hold schools and governments to account for delivering services. Getting the right balance of leadership and action across the different levels is central to realising better education for girls (DFID: 2005).



3.2.2 Increasing preparedness—parental and family involvement

The role of parents in the lives of their children has been one of unquestioned value, celebrated in cultures around the world. And the rights that come along with that responsibility—to direct the upbringing and education of one's own children—have been consistently honoured and upheld.

For promoting positive social skills among children, particularly among girls, families are crucial partners. Home visits, parent visitation to child care or school setting, telephone conversations, newsletters, informal notes, bulletin boards, workshops, and regular face-to-face communication can be instrumental for keeping families informed about the specific social skills being focused on in the early childhood setting and for care providers to learn about what families are doing at home.

Early care providers need to engage parents as soon as their child is enrolled in the programme and ask for assistance in understanding the child's background and the family's goals for the child. Mutual respect, cooperation, shared responsibility, and negotiation of differences in opinion between parents and care and education professionals are necessary to achieve shared goals related to the guidance and education of young children. Professionals' ethical responsibilities to families most related to guidance strategies include:

- *Develop relationships of mutual trust with families we serve;*
- *Acknowledge and build upon strengths and competencies as we support families in their task of nurturing children;*
- *Respect the dignity of each family and its culture, language, customs, and beliefs;*
- *Respect families' child-rearing values and their right to make decisions for their children; and*
- *Help family members improve their understanding of their children and enhance their skills as parents.*

Day care community centres for children under six years can relieve girls from looking after their siblings, thereby allowing them to go to school. Along with this all children, girls and boys in the school can be given training in childcare in the centre—so that the stereotyping that only the females in the family must care for children, would go.

3.2.3 Making schools affordable for girls

Cost is one obvious reason why the demand for girls' education might be low. Development planners have been using two distinct ways, among others, to offset the costs to families for educating children and to improve education quality so that incurring the cost is more worthwhile. Countries, which have taken decisive measures to cover direct and indirect costs and to compensate for the opportunity costs (scholarships and stipends) have been successful in promoting girls' education.

A: Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs)

Available evidence suggests that conditional cash transfers can help increase the enrolment of children, especially of girls at both the primary and secondary levels. Not only does the programme help keep girls in schools, but it also encourages high academic achievement and delays early marriage.



CCTs give stipends (scholarships) and food to the poorest if they meet certain conditions, such as that their children attend school, or their babies are vaccinated. Ten years ago there were a handful of such programmes and most were small. Now they are widely used in developing countries.

Most CCTs schemes, and to a limited extent school vouchers in the 9 countries, transfer money to the mother of the household or to the student in some circumstances. Some programmes adopt gender-based targeting. CCTs have been highly successful in Latin American countries. Perhaps the best-known scholarship scheme is the Bangladesh Female Secondary Stipend Programme, which dates back to 1982 and to which researchers attribute the country's impressive increase in girls' education. To continue to receive the stipend, each girl must maintain a minimum 75 percent attendance rate, at least a 45 percent score in the annual school exams, and must remain unmarried until she obtains the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) or reaches age 18 (Raynor and Wesson: 2006).

An in-depth search of studies found 23 studies on this topic. The evidence of these studies strongly indicates that CCTs increase enrolments and attendance, with benefits concentrated amongst the poorest children, although only half of available studies of the educational impacts of CCTs actually report results by gender. Further, there is no overall impact on learning outcomes (World Bank: 2009).

The CCTs in Cambodia, India and China deserve special attention. The Cambodian Scholarship Programme (CSP) makes very modest transfers, equivalent to between 2 and 3 percent of the total expenditures of the average recipient household, conditional on school enrolment for children of middle-school age. The results show that children who received scholarships were about 20 percentage points more likely to be enrolled in school, and 10 percentage points less likely to work for pay. Cambodia has all got more girls into education. However, the school enrolment and work of ineligible siblings was largely unaffected by the programme.

In India, in March 2008, "Dhanalakshmi" (Goddess of Wealth)—a CCT for female children with insurance cover—was introduced on an experimental basis in 11 educationally backward blocks across 7 provinces. The programme provides for cash transfers to the family of a female child on their fulfilling specific conditions: birth and registration of the child, immunization, enrolment and retention in school. If the girl remains unmarried at the age of 18, insurance cover of Rs.100,000 (US\$1,600) is given to her. There are several state governments which have launched variations of CCT programmes, providing incentives to promote the birth, survival, and girls' education.

DFID committed about £15 million to Gansu (China) basic education project that helps poor girls and boys enter and complete primary and junior middle schools.

While stipends are an effective intervention, there are questions about their sustainability and the cost burden placed on an education budget.

B: School fees

The type of fee charged varies from region to region. According to World Bank (2004), community contributions and PTA dues are the most common type (81% of countries surveyed) in Africa. Other fees are less common but nonetheless significant: tuition (41%), textbooks (37%), uniforms (48%), and other activity fees (41%).



In Uzbekistan and other Central Asian countries, tuition fees are common. Many fees paid formerly by public sector have been shifted to households. These fees are often collected unofficially and can represent a very high proportion of education expenditures. Fees for books and compulsory uniform are common. Schools also require community contributions.

Fees are commonplace in South Asia, including for private tutoring. Public schools in India charge tuition fees for primary education, as do schools in Nepal. Public schools in Sri Lanka do not charge tuition. These countries also impose textbook fees and require PTA and community contributions. Uniforms are not generally compulsory.

In East Asia and the Pacific (other than the former socialist countries), textbook fees (70% of countries), uniforms (80%), PTA and community contributions (80%) and other activity fees (70%) are common (World Bank: 2004). Tuition fees are less common but exist in Cambodia and China.

Evidence shows that the abolishment of and/or reduction in school fees in China, India, Nepal, Ghana and Ethiopia had significant effects on the number of students enrolled in primary school in these countries, particularly the girls. Most notably, waiving school fees for girls greatly increased their access to primary education, removing one of the many obstacles that they faced in order to attend school. Abolishing the school fees is an effective way for developing countries to increase the access to education for the youngest generation.

There are two ways in which fee abolishing and/or reduction interventions are used: (i) by providing free education; and (ii) by partially meeting school costs. Myanmar, for example, follows the policy of both total and partial exemption from school fees to increase the participation and retention of children, particularly girls, in schools.

The study on “The Impact of a Senior High School Tuition Relief Programme on Poor Junior High School Students in Rural China” found a significant gap remains between rural and urban students in the rate of admission to senior high school. One reason for this gap is the high levels of tuition fees for senior high school. The study found that the tuition programme has a statistically significant and positive impact on the math scores of seventh grade students particularly the poorest students in three counties of Shanxi province (Xinxin Chen et al.: undated).

Wearing a school uniform is often compulsory, so providing free school uniforms helps with the indirect costs of schooling. For example, the Government of Ghana launched its Free Uniforms Programme in 2009, aiming to reach 1.5 million children in 77 of the most deprived districts across the country. School uniform programmes not only relax financial barriers, they reduce the stigma for children from families who cannot afford uniforms or new uniforms. Further, school uniforms are seen to increase discipline and morale and build a sense of identity with the school, which may be conducive to better learning outcomes (Evans et al.: 2008).

However, there are certain limitations of fee abolition. The World Bank study show that fee abolition alone can bring large numbers of children into school, but it cannot keep them there unless accompanied by complementary measures. Secondly, indirect costs need to be compensated by the provision of stipends, CCTs, and other demands-side financing mechanisms to encourage the enrolment of the poor and girls at all level of education. Finally, fee abolition should be accompanied by increasing public expenditure on education (World Bank: 2004).



Box 3.2 Give Girls a Chance...

Eleni Muluneh, a founder member of the Ethiopian Youth Forum says

“... one of the core problems facing Ethiopia on Education is that most people in Ethiopia think that work is more important than education, so they start at a very early age with little to no education. More and more teen-age [girls] today drop out from school to go and work in the Arab countries as servants. [Boys] also drop out from school to work in Arab countries. The boys usually go there for being janitors, drivers, or guards. I got a chance to talk to Aisha. She quit school at the age of 15 to go to Libya. She went there hoping for a better future. After 3 years of hard labour, she came back. I asked her, ‘Why did you quit school at the first place?’ She responded by saying ‘I wanted to get a better and happier life for me and my family.’ I was amazed by this response. This shows us that these children don’t see the need for education. Their parents also don’t encourage them to get the education. In fact, it was Aisha’s Mum that pushed her to go for work. I asked Aisha ‘What does education mean to you?’ She replied by saying ‘For me, education is knowledge. But it is also a waste of time and money, when you could just go to work and help your family survive!’ What a discouraging response. Now Aisha is planning to go to Dubai. Her parents are encouraging her to go and work. All they care is for the money their daughter brings. They don’t plan for the future of their daughter.

Now, this type of silliness could be abolished if primary education was [free] and compulsory. People like Aisha could be taught about the need for education. If Aisha continued in her 6th grade, she would have had more knowledge about the needs of education”.

(Source: "Should Primary Education In Ethiopia Be Compulsory Education Essay", UKESSAYS, 23 March 2015.)

3.2.4 School-feeding programmes (SFPs)

The outcomes of the school feeding programmes in developing countries are mixed. For instance, in Nepal, India and Sri Lanka where SFPs are operational, the programmes have led to increase in girls’ enrolment, retention rates or conversely decrease in dropout rates, and improved performance of and attendance among girls. These programmes have helped in lowering the opportunity costs of attending school and in providing additional incentives to engage girls’ in formal education. However, increases in enrolment have also led to overcrowding and lowering the effectiveness of classroom time or stretching the limited amount of school resources such as books. Depending on how the SFP is set up, teaching time has reduced because teachers are used in overseeing the mealtime.

The Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB) study “Education in Focus: Impacts of School Feeding Programme on School Participation: A Case Study in Dara Woreda of Sidama Zone, Southern Ethiopia” (2011) found no significant positive impact of SFP on any of the three school participation indicators (enrolment, attendance and drop-out), although it has some roles with regard to these objectives.

Under the USDA McGovern-Dole funded School Support Programme, in collaboration with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the Government of Nepal, WFP provided mid-



day meals for 210,000 children at 1,800 pre-primary and primary schools in 11 districts of the mid- and far-western regions. WFP combines the school meals programme with infrastructure development, to significantly improve the learning environment and have a greater impact for quality education and better performance. Programme evaluation shows that girls and children from extremely poor families are particularly encouraged to enrol, if proper school facilities are available nearby. The programme evaluation showed that getting more children into school have exacerbated overcrowding, and administering the feeding has eaten into the school day. And if quality of schooling is low, simply getting children to sit at a desk, if there is one, will not improve their learning.

The World Food Programme (WFP) started “Cambodia School Feeding” in 2001 in support of basic education. The programme reached a significant 20 percent of primary pupils in 2009 in 1,624 of the 6,665 schools in the country. More vulnerable segments of the population were targeted. The evaluation found a significant effect on enrolment in that school feeding was a strong incentive for parents to send their children to school—but the positive effect was only sustained while schools benefited from the programme. The evaluation also found that take-home rations had a significant positive effect on attendance; the school meals programme had a positive tendency. School feeding reduced dropout rates, especially in grades 2, 3 and 4, but standard performance tests showed minimal benefits in terms of improved learning, which is probably attributable to contextual factors (WFP: 2011).

Food alone cannot bring children to school or keep them there. Only a viable effective education programme can do that. An ideal school-feeding initiative requires open communication and joint ownership. The problems of school feeding are usually those of implementation or inappropriate or partial solutions.

3.2.5 School-based health programmes

School-based health programmes compensate indirect costs and increase attendance. These interventions include (i) treatment-based interventions and (ii) prevention-based interventions. Studies suggest that school health programmes may be a cost effective way of increasing school participation where many children suffer from poor health. Combined with take-home rations for girls, these programmes have resulted in raising girls' enrolment by about 50 percent (UNICEF: 2005).

In India, the State of Bihar administered in 2011 deworming drugs to 17 million children in a state-wide school programme. Children registered large weight gains, a nearly 50 percent reduction in moderate-to-severe cases of anaemia, and a reduction in school absence rates among children ages 4–6 (WFP: 2001).

In Sri Lanka, small positive effects were seen when children were provided with vitamin A supplementation at school, but it is unclear whether this is due to children feeling better as a result of supplementation. In Sri Lanka, malaria treatment reduced school absenteeism due to that specific illness by 63 per cent, while other forms of absenteeism remained the same. Test scores were 26 per cent higher in maths and language for children receiving treatment for malaria than for untreated children (WFP: 2001).

The overall outcomes of school-health programmes present a mixed picture. Programmes that treat children in school for malaria appear not only to reduce absenteeism and dropout rates, but also improve test scores. Deworming does not always lead to increase in school enrolment and attendance, or an increase in test scores.



3.2.6 New schools close to girls' home with community support and flexible schedules

In the absence of school buildings particularly in rural areas, fees removal and scholarships will be of little help. Available research and programme experience suggest that building decent schools within the vicinity of catchment areas with the provision of trained teachers, teaching materials, and a reasonable curriculum have helped to bring millions of boys and girls into schools—at least at the primary level and where parents are not desperately poor or traditions do not severely restrict girls and women. Community involvement in local schools, flexible schedules for safe schools for girls' and availability of pre-school and child-care programmes appear highly promising for promoting girls' education. Evidence particularly from South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa—including areas where hardly any girls have attended school—shows community-based approaches can sharply boost girls' enrolment and achievement in just a few years (Herz and Sperling: 2004).

Schools, parents, and the community should work together to promote the education, wellbeing, and learning of all students. When schools actively involve and engage community resources they are able to respond more effectively to the education-related needs of students. Community involvement fosters partnerships among schools, family and community groups, and individuals. These partnerships result in sharing and maximizing resources.

Studies show that linking community activities to the classroom (i) Improves school-related behaviours; (ii) positively impacts academic achievement; and (iii) reduces school suspension rates.

In Ethiopia, communities and PTAs are playing important roles in all aspects of education from generating resources to managing schools. Resources are mobilized for purchasing basic equipment and materials, hiring contract teachers, and building classrooms and schools. PTAs are active in raising the awareness of the general community on the benefits of education and in encouraging parents to send their children to school so as to increase access and reduce dropout. PTAs are involved in school management, preparing annual plans and follow-up disciplinary cases. Hence, communities are funding new school buildings, building teachers' houses, running non-formal education initiatives, and encouraging girls to go to school and be retained in school until they complete a given level of education. However, PTAs and communities still need further capacity enhancement in order to enable them to carry out the quality of support that schools need to help them function as desired (Ethiopia: 2005).

A case worth mentioning is that of BRAC. Non-formal schools run by the Bangladesh Rural Action Committee (BRAC) achieved nearly double the completion rates of government schools—90 percent versus 53 percent. The programme focuses on involving communities in transitioning the hardest-to-reach populations from informal, more flexible BRAC schools into the formal system (Herz: 2002).

One way for schools to reach out into the community might involve starting conversations and planning activities with churches, temples, mosques, local ethnic groups, and community-based organizations. Schools can gain additional resources and a better understanding of their students' backgrounds by reaching out to their community organizations. Parents in these organizations may feel alienated from traditional educators, and they may welcome the schools' outreach efforts. Ultimately, when educators, community groups, and parents present a united front, they can become a powerful force for school reform.



3.2.7 *Girl-friendly/child-friendly schools*

“Child-friendly/girl-friendly” schools are schools that children want to attend. They are endowed with adequate resources to provide basic primary education and employ competent teachers who use teaching methods that provide children—girls in particular—with a safe, nurturing and gender-sensitive learning environment (Box 2.7).

One of the salient features of a girls-friendly school is its exclusive reliance on “Gender-Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) Model”—a model that helps equip teachers and school management with knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to respond adequately to the learning needs of girls and boys. The GRP approach makes teachers more gender aware by training them in gender-sensitive classroom processes and practices which result in equal participation of boys and girls in the classroom as well as in the community.

The GRP Model demonstrates how to transform teaching and learning processes to become gender-responsive in relation to lesson planning, teaching and learning materials, language used in the classroom, classroom set-up, classroom interaction and the role of school management in supporting gender-responsive pedagogical approaches in the school.

The prime focus of the Model is on: (i) training of teachers that targets practical skills, and (ii) GRP training of the school management team. Training to both teachers and managers is delivered primarily through school-based in-service teacher training. However, in order to ensure that all teacher trainee graduates acquire gender-responsive pedagogical skills, organisations such as UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) and Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE) are also working with teacher training colleges in selected Sub-Saharan African countries to influence the mainstreaming of GRP in teacher training college curricula in order to train pre-service teachers and lecturers in gender responsiveness.

These girls’/friendly schools also feature improved water and sanitation, particularly, separate latrine blocks for girls and boys—an accommodation that has been shown to be helpful in promoting the attendance of adolescent girls.

By involving the entire community, the schools provide education and training not only to teachers, but also to students, parents and other community members through participation in education committees, mothers’ associations and functional literacy classes for adults.

Studies have shown that provision of a basic school nearby, with a teacher and textbooks is a necessary condition to increasing girls’ enrolment. But for getting more and more girls in school and keeping them in school, and for attaining gender parity in primary education, private latrine facilities, girls’ privacy and safety in line with cultural requirements, teaching methods that discourage gender stereotypes and encourage girls to achieve, and female teachers for girls are must.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, while non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as foundations focus on bringing water and sanitation facilities to developing countries, they do not have a particular emphasis on improving sanitation in schools. Western corporations donate sanitary supplies to African girls, but questions of the long-term sustainability of these donations have yet to be addressed. Moreover, programmes have not been implemented to discuss basic issues of menstruation, health, and hygiene since these topics are seen as taboo in many Sub-Saharan African societies.



In this region, at least four components of the “girl friendly” approach to education are vital: the first is the building of private and hygienic toilets at schools; the second entails supplying clean water for washing; the third involves providing sanitary pads and tampons to school girls at little to no cost; and the fourth concerns educating students and teachers about puberty and hygiene so as to improve girls’ health, promote dialogue, and dispel menstrual taboos (Claire: 2010).

In the Asian region, significant attempts have been made to improve the quality of teaching methodology. “Joyful Learning’ and ‘Minimum Ways of Teaching-Learning” are learning approaches being used. Increasingly, “child-friendly” teaching training workshops are conducted in China, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

The unique experience of China’s child/friendly schools (CFS) deserves a special mention. A National Framework for CFS has been operational with particular emphasis on inclusiveness and equity. The framework supports teachers toward innovative and effective teaching and learning. It includes: a mobile teacher support system; guidelines for teachers; digitalized teaching and teacher training technology with National Commission for Educational Technology; interactive and inquiry-based teaching and learning; bilingual education for ethnic minority children; head teacher training; and more. A series of indicators have been developed to help schools achieve this. The main areas of intervention include:

- Teacher training on gender equality.
- Teachers’ knowledge and ability to identify the gender bias and stereotypes in the textbooks or teaching material.
- Teachers’ training guide to promote among students gender-sensitive hobbies and career choices.
- Advocacy materials to develop role models of women.
- Involvement of all learners in active learning, and in interaction with teachers on the basis of learners’ learning ability rather than on learners’ gender.
- Participation of all the boys and girls in school management and welfare.

Although the approaches adopted in the south Asian countries have been successful in improving access to girls’ attendance and dropout rates, but still girls continue to encounter discrimination in rural school on the basis of religion, caste and ethnicity in India and Nepal and on the basis of mother tongue in Sri Lanka.

The child-friendly/girl-friendly schools approach is familiar in the CEE/CIS region. In Uzbekistan, the approach is used as a foundation for the development of education standards relevant to national contexts. The Child-Friendly School framework is used to address issues of access to basic education as well as issues related to the quality, efficiency, governance and management of the education system of Uzbekistan. Girls’ education cuts across all areas of the child-friendly school programmes.



Box 3.3

**Child-Friendly School—Kanjana's Experiences
Give Girls a Chance...**

My name is Sivatheepan Kajanika. I study in Grade 5 at Nilaveli Tamil Mixed School in Trincomalee District, Sri Lanka.

In 2008, I didn't like to go to school. I wasn't happy with the way of teaching. The teachers weren't friendly. Because of this, I hated studying.

Since 2010, it's been much better because I like the principal and the teachers. I like the way they teach, and this is what I expect from them.

I am happy to study now.

It's fun at school. We have dance classes and physical instruction. If someone doesn't bring food from home, we all share. The school environment is friendly. We all like each other and play together.

I like this school. The walls have been beautifully painted. There's a lovely garden in the school with nice-smelling flowers. There are positive messages on the walls. There's a timetable on whose turn it is to clean the school. I want to continue my studies here.

The toilets are clean. There are separate ones for boys and girls, and the toilets are separate from the school building.

Vedushana is my best friend. If I ask her she will always help me, and if I need to go somewhere she comes with me. She is definitely my best friend.

I say to other children that if you don't go to school you should do. Your parents are working hard so you should study hard, too.

I want to become a teacher and teach poor children. Poor children can then become teachers and help other poor children.

(Source: Sivatheepan Kajanika (2012): "In Sri Lanka, child-friendly schools transform communities", UNICEF, 21 May, 2012)

3.2.8 Quality improvement

The highest performing education systems are those that combine equity with quality. They give all children opportunities for a good quality education. Quality determines how much and how well children learn and the extent to which their education translates into a range of personal, social and developmental benefits. Goal 6 of the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) emphasises the need of a stimulating pedagogy. It is the teaching and learning process that brings the curriculum to life that determines what happens in the classroom and subsequently the quality of the learning outcomes.

For education to be meaningful and of high quality, schools equip students with the knowledge of (i) learning to know; (ii) learning to do; (iii) learning to work together; and (iv) learning to be—the four pillars of Delores report (1996), Learning: The Treasure Within.



Viewed from this perspective, the 9 Asian and Sub-Saharan African countries have been endeavouring to address the quality concerns. For quality improvement, countries in these two regions are focusing on the following key determinants of quality education:

- Education content that offers relevant curricula and teaching/learning materials for the acquisition and application of basic skills (literacy, numeracy and life skills).
- Education processes through which trained teachers use student-centred teaching approaches and assessment to facilitate learning and to reduce disparities.
- Education environments that are healthy, safe and gender-sensitive, as well as providing an adequate infrastructure for learning.
- Teachers who are professionally competent and motivated to teach.
- Learners who are healthy, well nourished and prepared for learning.

The quality of Cambodia's education system and its overall disregard for gender mainstreaming in the classroom is disappointing (Chansopheak, 2009). Texts tend to reinforce traditional gender role models, school facilities tend to be under-maintained and lacking in many basic needs, and curriculum fails to prepare students to enter the working world upon graduation. A quality evaluation system does not exist for hiring school personnel, resulting in female candidates being passed over for less qualified male candidates (Chinnh et al.: 2009). Textbooks past the primary level do not represent concepts of "gender equality and social inclusion especially in line with the policies of the education reform" (Velasco, 2004). Though there is indication that with donor partner intervention, some changes may be forthcoming, the most recent textbooks do not yet reflect gender fairness or equality (Booth: 2014).

The Chinese programme for quality education follows a comprehensive strategy. First it provides for improvement of learning environments, including improvement of infrastructure and provision of decent classrooms and learning materials. Second, it addresses the critical process element of teacher and supervisor training in both pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes, through workshops based on principles of cooperative learning; quality instructional practices, teachers' knowledge, and skills and attitudes. Third, it accords focused attention for lower-achieving students, especially girls which in turn strengthens learning and improving self-esteem and social cohesiveness. This format succeeded in strengthening learning and improving self-esteem and social competence. Finally, textbooks are regularly reviewed and new contents are added and are provided to schools along with manuals for teachers and supervisors.

The Social Assessment of the General Education Quality Improvement Programme Phase I (2009–2013) Phase II (2013–...) in Ethiopia addresses both the supply and demand side constraints affecting enrolment, repletion and dropout. Phase I included an explicit focus on girls' education, support to Alternative Basic Education Centres, and building of institutional capacity. The evaluation of Phase I shows an increase in the proportion of female teachers from 33% to 34%, girls' primary completion rate from 45% to 52% and a decrease in dropout rate of girls in Grade 8 from 19% to 15%. An additional 17,000 girls passed Grade 10 examination (MOE: 2013).

In Ghana, The quality of education has over the years been measured by the quality of teachers, pupil-teacher ratios, pupil-textbook ratios, and pupils' cognitive achievement in the form of examination results. In the absence of information, assessment of impact of measures seems quite difficult.



In India, low quality basic education is often debated in academic circle. It is best explained as: “Teachers have to teach multiple grades, textbooks are pitched far above the comprehension level of students, and each classroom has children with different levels of learning achievements” (Dhir Jhingran, Indian Administrative Service). Further, Anurag Behar, CEO of the Azim Premji Foundation, an education non-profit foundation, noted that “the average school [female] teacher in India does not get adequate pre-service or in-service education, nor does she get the support to overcome these problems.” Compounding this is the relatively low educational qualifications of many teachers themselves. In 2008-2009, on average, 45% of these teachers had not studied beyond the 12th grade. Other factors responsible for low quality include: low teacher motivation and high absenteeism; highly bureaucratic administrative system; flawed teaching methodology; linguistic diversity (22 official languages and hundreds of spoken dialects).

“The Indian government has worked very hard to provide rural schools with adequate infrastructure, something that was critically lacking a few decades ago.” For instance, DISE reported in 2012 that more than 91% of primary schools have drinking-water facilities and 86% of schools built in the last 10 years have a school building. However, there is still a long way to go: only 52% of primary schools have a girls’ toilet, and just 32% are connected to the electricity grid (Gelda, et al.: 2013).

To sum up, all the countries have made progress in providing quality education to girls, but the progress is slow. The analysis shows that countries can provide education to all girls provided they succeed in keeping cost of education low and giving a reasonable quality of education. China, India, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan are just some of the countries whose reforms and innovations suggest promising approaches and point to the need for a comprehensive set of policy reforms and programmes. In other countries, any one measure—building latrines, training teachers, or offering scholarships—alone be a “silver bullet”. Most evidence suggests that what is needed is a package of policies and programmes.

3.3 Girls’ Education: Innovative Approaches and Success Stories

“Access to education has improved in the past decade for millions of children. But far too many of the world’s most disadvantaged children remain excluded from school, and many of the children in school do not learn the basic skills they need to lead productive lives. Education systems around the globe must do more than increase resources to engage the children excluded because of location, gender, disability, ethnic origin, violence or natural disaster. Addressing these challenges requires more than business as usual (UNICEF–70 Years for Every Child)”.

In light of these global concerns, this section of the report presents some key innovative approaches and success stories in our sampled countries to demonstrate how these countries are attempting to address the persistent educational needs of girls.

We have seen above that since 1990, when only half the girls living in low-income countries were in school, the number of girls in primary school increased more than two and a half times by 2014—from 24 million to nearly 63 million—and today 80 percent of girls in low-income countries are enrolled. Despite the phenomenal progress, girls are still far more likely to drop out before completing primary education, have markedly worse experience in school, often characterized by violence, abuse and exploitation, and have scant chance of progressing to secondary school and tertiary education.



The Sub-Saharan African and Asian regions have taken several promising initiatives that address the girls' learning needs. The initiatives exhibit innovative best practices in that they maximize and improve access, equity, quality, efficiency and effectiveness of education especially for girls and the children of marginalized population groups. Each project has been selected from an array of projects in girls' education in 9 countries with proven success, that is, on the basis of the following criteria:

- Identify and rectify real barriers for girls' non-attendance by asking girls, parents, and the community what these barriers are and not relying on a perceived general consensus as to why girls, women and the marginalized do not attend school.
- Have strong community support and buy-in and community investment in the projects.
- Garner support and buy in for the projects by public authorities.
- Connect curriculum to the realities of their students.
- Tailor outcomes to fit the diverse range of social, cultural and economic conditions.
- Look forward in setting the stage for long-terms educational success.

These approaches (projects) are more effective, efficient, sustainable and equitable than the existing solutions. They demonstrate how girls' education have been advanced over time also those approaches that are emerging and promising and have the potential to promote girls' education. At the end of each innovative approach, a list of key lessons learned is presented together with a success story.

IMPROVED BASIC EDUCATION PROJECT: CAMBODIA

The education system in Cambodia continues to face challenges relating to poor quality and lack of access, particularly to girls in rural areas. At the most fundamental level, too many Cambodian students leave school—often before completing their studies. As a result they are left with few practical life skills and little to prepare them to make a living, having cut their education short before developing good interpersonal communications skills, sound judgement and creative thinking ability.

In 2009, USAID launched the “Improved Basic Education in Cambodia Project (IBECP)”, which is being implemented by World Education. As part of a consortium of groups assisting World Education, Equal Access (EA) is implementing a three-year life skills project targeting secondary school youth in Kampong Cham province.

EA's approach includes schools, teachers, students, and radio stations in an engaging and educational multimedia project designed to encourage a more holistic approach to life skills education.

Drawing on the format and immense popularity of USAID's approach “We Can Do It” youth radio series, Equal Access has developed a special series of the programme repackaged for a younger audience (13–16 years old). The young hosts of this magazine-style radio programme lead segments highlighting key life skills, such as decision-making, communication and self-confidence, which are tied to IBECP activities and the experiences of secondary students in Kampong Cham. The presenters are woven into a drama segment that inspires the imagination and creativity of listeners. In these dramas, characters discuss diverse subjects such as employment opportunities and goal setting. Listeners are challenged to think critically about the fictional characters' decision-making processes and the presenters' comments and questions about each episode's topic.



The radio series is broadcast on radio stations in Kampong Cham province and also made available to partner schools in the province in audio libraries and computer labs established by IBCEP. In order to support schools to teach life skills using these multimedia materials, teachers are provided with suggested written exercises and discussion topics that they can use after listening to radio episodes with their students. Audio exercises are also included at the end of each recorded episode, which encourage students to work together to answer questions and solve problems.

In addition to the radio series, schools are also provided educational comic books featuring characters from episodes. Similarly designed to teach key skills within the context of relevant issues in Cambodia today, the comics feature learning exercises to support teachers in designing lesson plans and guiding skills development.

Student listening and dialogue groups have also been formed in partner schools, with learning exercises and discussion guides available to help support them. Students meet to listen to programmes and discuss the issues presented within the context of their daily lives. Led by a trained youth facilitator, these meetings enable students to gain a more in-depth understanding of the issues addressed in the programmes, and discussion guides provided by Equal Access give participants the opportunity to practice and develop key life skills explored in the shows.

Connecting project activities and student participants from partner schools are groups of student reporters trained to conduct recorded interviews and collect information from other pupils and listening dialogue groups. The reporters' comments, views and questions are incorporated into radio episodes, giving listeners a sense of interaction with the programme, and allowing them to hear the views and ideas of their peers.

The project aims to improve basic education levels by inspiring teachers to offer a more rounded level of education that incorporates creative multimedia learning materials designed to educate, inspire, and entertain. As a result, Equal Access is contributing to efforts to develop more confident and more ambitious students equipped with life skills that will benefit them through school and in the workplace.

(Source: Extracted from Equal Access—Improving Basic Education in Cambodia.)

Lessons Learned

- A significant innovation of the IBEC project is the classification of its target schools into "development readiness" tiers. Tier 1 schools are advanced schools with excellent school governance. Tier 2 schools are satisfactory in regard to management. Tier 3 schools are at a poor stage of development. Higher tier schools receive greater funding through their School Improvement Development Plan, as they are considered able to absorb more external aid more effectively. Lower tier schools receive greater capacity building assistance to enable them to move up in tier level.
- The innovation of adjusting aid to readiness and performance is an intervention that helps promote good governance practices in target areas. This "results based" budgeting and grants management device based on tier distinctions correctly places the responsibility for effectiveness on the School Director. Donors considering grant assistance may also appreciate the tier structure approach as it shifts accountability for performance to the Provincial Education Office, which manages local Ministry staff, including school directors.
- The tier classification may have the unintended consequence of exacerbating the gap between strong and weak schools. The tier concept shifts resources to the strongest and most successful of the attractive schools, and away from the relatively weaker schools.



STORY 1 CAMBODIA

“For Cambodian girls, education is antidote to poverty and sexual exploitation”, says fifteen old Seng Srey who dropped out of school for two years to work in the fields when her mother was ill and too weak to work. For a girl who always was first in class, not going to school was devastating. “I used to cry when I saw my friends on their way to school,” Seng Srey says.

Seng Srey, who lives alone with her mother in Prey Veng Province, a poverty-stricken area in Cambodia, has reason to smile again. Thanks to OPTIONS, a programme run by World Education with financial support from UNICEF and the United States Department of Labour, she is receiving a scholarship that allows her to attend classes at Dey Thoy School in Bung Preah Commune.

OPTIONS scholarships enable girls at risk of dropping out to remain in primary and lower secondary school. In poor provinces like Prey Veng, where many families are forced to migrate to escape the impact of persistent floods and drought, the scholarships also help protect girls from being trafficked or sexually exploited.

Seng Srey is ambitious. She gets up at 5 a.m. every morning to do her homework because after school she has to help her mother in the field. She just started taking English classes and wants to become an interpreter.

“I would love to go to secondary school, but my mother says that she will let me complete only grade 9,” says Seng Srey fighting back her tears. “If I think about it, I have to admit that I probably won’t be able to stay in school.”

OPTIONS programme in Cambodia has been successful in (i) decreasing teen girls’ perception of the commercial sex industry as innocuous or glamorous, (ii) increasing teen girls’ perception of the commercial sex industry as dangerous and debilitating, increase teen girls’ ability to reduce the risk of exploitation (i.e. assertiveness, negotiation skills, etc.) or increase the likelihood that teens can find the path and resources to exit if they become exploited, and (iv) Improvement in self-esteem and confidence among teen girls in their abilities as community change agents.

(Source: Extracted from United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative–Cambodia: Newslines.)

SPRING BUD PROGRAMME IN YUNNAN PROVINCE: CHINA National programme

The Spring Bud Project has been launched, organized and carried out by the China Children and Teenagers' Fund (CCTF), under the leadership of the All China Women's Federation. The goal of the project is to assist the dropout girl children in the poor areas to go back to school. Also, this programme is conducive to China's realization and solidification of the nine-year compulsory education and elimination of adult illiteracy. Up to now, this programme has been widespread all over the country, with 600 million RMB raised, 1.5 million dropout girl children assisted to go back to school, and over 300 Spring Bud Schools set up. To increase girls' capacity of relying on their own to build their homeland, China Children and Teenagers' Fund has set up a Special Fund for Training of Practical Skills, providing technical training for adolescent girls.



Up until 2010, the programme has raised over 600 million Yuan (US\$88.2 million) to build 500 schools, operate 5,000 special classes and sponsor education and training in practical skills for more than 1.7 million girls in China. It is currently regarded as the largest international NGO Spring Bud initiative in China.

Over the past decade, this longitudinal field project has gone through four stages:

- Springbud Project #1—Photovoice
- Springbud Project #2—Survey 1000+ girls, their teachers, and school principals (For a glimpse of survey instruments and results)
- Springbud Project #3—Rural Children's Identity
- Springbud Project #4—Research on Schooling, Expectations, Aspirations, Empowerment

From 2006, according to China's amended Compulsory Education Law, children in rural areas and from poor urban families do not have to pay tuition during the nine-year compulsory education period. So now, the Spring Bud Project has extended its scope from girls' tuition and living expenses from compulsory education to focusing on higher education by assisting high school and college students.

The proven practice of the programme is in spotting a gap in prevention efforts and adjusting the education-based response to include scholarships, innovative participatory learning methods that better relate to community realities and keep vulnerable students in school longer, working intensely with families and educating community members about trafficking to encourage their support in stopping it—in short, a holistic approach.

The programme in Yunnan Province, co-sponsored by the Internal Labour Organisation (ILO), was developed with three "pillars": (i) scholarships to ethnic minority girls in four counties (Jiangcheng, Menghai, Menglian and Yuanyang); (ii) improving the quality of education; and (iii) building community momentum for involvement in protecting girls and also for replicating the programme elsewhere in China.

The four counties are located in remote border areas where poverty and the existence of many marginalized ethnic minority groups are particularly vulnerable to traffickers. In line with the Government's move to promote nine years of compulsory education, the projects' efforts have concentrated on dealing with problems of poor families, poor quality of teaching and the difficulty of enrolling girls into school and preventing them from dropping out.

In the first phase, the ILO project staff worked with the Yunnan Provincial Women's Federation to establish a project plan, a steering committee and a project management office. The Women's Federation pinpointed the Education Bureau as the primary partner for delivering trainings on trafficking, vocational and life skills and public health. Consultants followed the cascade method of training, that is, they trained a core group of teachers who in turn trained other teachers and then students in the same topic. The Women's Federation took charge of adult vocational training and business development.

To improve access to education, scholarships were given to 800 ethnic minority girls in four counties. This included assistance for transportation, boarding costs and other school fees. Girls were screened by the Education Bureau on the basic criterion of vulnerability; families unable or unwilling to provide funds necessary for a daughter to go to school determined acceptance into the programme.



To improve education quality, an innovative ILO programme called SCREAM—Supporting Children’s Rights Through Education, the Arts and the Media—was introduced to teachers. SCREAM involves new socially, economically and culturally appropriate modules that use participatory methods. The training focused on topics neglected in the standard curriculum but applied to the vulnerabilities that ethnic minority girls typically encounter, such as child labour. Through deep-learning methodologies, such as drama, creative writing and art, SCREAM introduces young people to complexities and helps them develop appropriate responses and channel their creative energy in a positive and constructive way. SCREAM modules were designed using interactive approaches and encourage active involvement through the sharing of views and experiences, role-playing, discussion and debates. The method makes education more relevant, easy to grasp and culturally sensitive.

Each week, students had at least one 45-minute SCREAM session in which trafficking, gender equality and job-finding skills were addressed from different angles, often with guest speakers.

New teaching modules were developed on:

- Trafficking risks: Both what a trafficker may say in the village to coerce a family, and how a girl could be trafficked on her way to the city or while she is already there.
- General life skills: Including public health knowledge, HIV prevention and negotiation skills.
- Vocational training: Including hospitality training.
- Gender equity: Modules on equity between the sexes that runs across all other topics.

The girls were encouraged to take their SCREAM lessons as well as the skits, dances and songs to their communities. “The girls taught us how to raise pigs and goats,” noted one farmer.

To encourage teacher ownership of the SCREAM methodology, students provided feedback and advice and the teachers were allowed to revise the curriculum. A partnership workshop was organized in the second year of the programme for administrators, officials and teachers to refine the participatory monitoring and evaluation tools, which were then tested in target schools and communities.

To improve community participation in protecting girls, government bureau members were included in relevant trainings. The Women’s Federation, on their own-funded initiative, developed brochures on trafficking prevention and safe migration that they distributed; the Education Bureaus developed vocational skills handbooks for girls and community members and conducted trainings on cultivation skills, animal husbandry, handicraft design, small-business development and hospitality skills.

Programme outcome

- 800 at-risk girls received direct assistance for three years of lower secondary education support; they were trained in cultivation skills, animal husbandry, home appliance repair, domestic service and handicraft making.
- Advocacy with parents got a further 637 children back into primary schools and 728 children back into lower secondary education in 2004.



- 65 educators received training on SCREAM methodology, anti-trafficking lessons and techniques; copies of SCREAM modules were translated into Chinese and distributed to education points; instructional handbooks on six topics (trafficking, vocational training, life skills, gender equity, law and rights, working conditions) were produced.
- 25 partners attended a replication meeting to share experiences and take the project to other counties. A documentary was produced on positive lessons of the Spring Bud programme and distributed to 129 counties in Yunnan province.

Anecdotal evidence and small independent studies have indicated that the trafficking of girls has decreased and girls' ability to protect themselves has increased.

The education assistance helped increase confidence, assertiveness and self-reliance among the girls and helped them focus on their own education. They have been encouraged to return to their villages and promote awareness on the importance of education and the dangers of trafficking as well as on HIV prevention. The vocational and hospitality trainings allowed the girls, who spoke their own dialects, to better communicate with Mandarin-speaking people. The public health and life skills trainings gave them tools to handle their changing environment.

(Source: Extracted from ILO: Meeting the Challenge Proven Practices for Human Trafficking Prevention in the Greater Mekong Sub-region.)

Lessons learned

- The approach is holistic and allows for flexibility within the programme to address different challenges of different communities. One county, for example, suffered exceptionally from poverty and thus the opportunity cost of girls' education was more of an issue than in another county where there was more economic development and thus other reasons for girls dropping out of school, such as the quality of teaching.
- To increase the number of girls being enrolled and staying in schools, the project worked intensively with their families. Persuasion, combined with direct financial assistance (covering transportation, lodging and other costs) provided the motivation for parents to allow and—unusually—to actively encourage their girls to complete the three years of lower secondary school.
- The opportunity cost of girls' education is more of an issue in resource-poor county than in another county where there is more economic development and thus other reasons for girls dropping out of school need to be explored.



STORY 2 CHINA

Tien Ching, founder of the charity organization Educating Girls in Rural China in 2005 now living in Canada, her experience during the "cultural revolution" (1966–76) in her teenage years changed her life, and consequently, the destiny of hundreds of girls in Gansu, Guizhou and Qinghai provinces that have benefitted from the education project she created.

But in 2004, during a UNICEF fundraiser event for African girls at her daughter's school, she was inspired by the concept that "educated women will have educated children". That was her "light bulb moment" to set up Educating Girls in Rural China.

Since its creation in 2005, EGRC has helped over 500 girls from rural areas of Gansu, Guizhou and Qinghai get through school and on to college. Around 300 of the sponsored girls have already graduated, 150 are currently attending university, and more than 100 are attending high school.

Tien said she feels most proud of having achieved a 100-percent graduation rate, and attributes that to the fact her organization does more than merely provide financial means to the girls—it's often the moral support that it offers that proves the key to success, she insists.

Most of the financial support EGRC receives comes from Canadian and Chinese individuals, fundraising events in Canada and Beijing, Canadian corporations who operate in China and different international organizations in Beijing and Shanghai.

(Source: China Daily: "Girls Education Project is proving a massive success", 23 April 2015.)

PASTORALIST AFAR GIRLS' EDUCATION SUPPORT: ETHIOPIA

The Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) UK Aid aims to improve the learning opportunities and outcomes for up to one million of the world's most marginalised girls. Access to a good quality education will give these girls the chance of a better future for themselves, their families and their communities.

The three-fold aims of the GEC projects are:

- Scaling up successful interventions that are already having a positive impact.
- Applying new interventions such as technological innovations, developing new partnerships, adapting proven solutions for new geographies, communities or age groups.
- Creating new partnerships with the private sector.

The GEC projects and partnerships are implementing a diverse range of interventions to provide girls with access to education, materials, safe spaces to learn and a 'voice'. They are helping to mobilise and build capacity within governments, communities and schools, training and mentoring teachers, governors and community leaders. Projects are targeting marginalised girls, disabled girls and migrant communities, with more than half of the target group living in high-risk and conflict-affected environments.



The GEC's project "The Pastoralist Afar Girls' Education Support Projects (PAGES)" in Ethiopia is organised by Save the Children UK with the support of key partner organisations.

Save the Children International (SCI), CARE International (CARE), Afar Pastoralist Development Association (APDA), Kelem Education and Training Board (Kelem). The focus of the project is to promote girls' primary education by using Amharic/Afar as language of instruction in the Pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities in eight rural woredas of Afar with a total funding of about 11 million sterling pounds. So far 18,498 girls of the project area have benefitted from the project.

The project is implementing the following activities:

- Strengthening the provision of quality and gender-responsive alternative basic education and formal primary education services for girls in pastoralist communities.
- Improving physical infrastructure of schools including classrooms and access to water.
- Improving life skills, literacy and confidence levels of marginalised girls and creating supportive community environments.
- Improving basic service delivery, coordination and livelihood opportunities to minimise demand-side barriers to quality education for girls.
- Strengthening government capacity to sustain and scale up project outcomes through strategic partnerships.

This project is innovative in its adaptation of successful models for delivery; mobilisation and behaviour change to the unique context and language of Afar. This includes the adaptation of the first cycle primary curriculum into the Afar context and language. This builds on global evidence and advocacy by Save the Children on the importance of learning in mother tongue during early years.

Another distinctive element of this project is its leverage of international and local expertise, including that of the private sector via Girl Hub Ethiopia. The project is also developing strategies to reduce/minimise the impact of migration based on learning and testing of strategies such as Herder's Kits, Camel Libraries and Mobile Attendance Cards.

(Source: Adapted from "Pastoralist Afar Girls' Education Support Projects", UK Girls' Education Challenge; Project Profile.)

Lessons learned

- GEC has earned unique credibility as a reliable partner willing to support Pastoralist Afar Girls' Education needs. It has provided longer-term support for systems improvement and institutional strengthening, some of which take considerable time to have full impact on education outcomes. The development of school clusters has created more effective structures for supporting school management, providing pedagogic support and facilitating exchanges among the schools and teachers in the clusters.
- The school grants programmes and related training for school and community leaders have led to greatly increased parent and community participation and engagement with the schools, with substantial community mobilization of additional resources.



- Programme areas which did not observe progress include the establishment of “Centres of Excellence” at selected teacher training colleges. This requires a more in-depth assessment and design review, going beyond the scope and time limitations of the assessment team.

STORY 3 ETHIOPIA

“Alternative Basic Education (ABE) keeps pastoral children’s dream alive”, says ten-year-old Medina Humed Ahmed and opens up about her dreams for the future.

“I want to drive one of those land cruisers, and I also want to fly airplanes,” she declares, pointing up at the cloudless sky above the desert of Ethiopia’s Afar Region. Her words generate a loud round of applause from her family.

In contrast to the confidence she now has, just two months ago Medina wasn’t sure if she would have much of a future. She spent most of her time helping her mother with household chores. Her contact with the outside world was limited to fetching water, looking for firewood, and taking the family’s sheep and goats in search of pasture.

But now, Medina goes to school—an opportunity provided to her and other pastoral children like her by the Alternative Basic Education (ABE) strategy, which is being implemented by the Afar Region Education Bureau with UNICEF support.

Afar Region, where Medina lives with her family, has a population of more than 1 million, and is one of the poorest regions of Ethiopia. Infrastructure here is minimal, and an estimated 90 per cent of school-age children are not in school, far worse than the already poor national average of 43 per cent.

The ABE system responds to the urgent need for an education that suits the special needs and constraints of pastoral life. It provides flexible school hours, allowing pastoral children fulfil their household responsibilities while still finding time for school. The teachers are familiar with the community, and understand the pastoral lifestyle.

These days, Medina gets up at the crack of dawn and joins her 12-year-old brother Mohammed to take their family’s sheep and goats out to pasture. They leave early in order to be back in time to collect their schoolbooks. By 8 a.m., both will be present at the school door for morning line-up and exercises along with more than 40 other students.

Their lessons include instruction in the Afar and English languages, mathematics and environmental studies. The community sets class times. Some classes are taught on Saturdays, and the ABE school year is sometimes longer than regular school year, in order to make sure that children have time both to attend school and to help with family chores

(Source: UNICEF Ethiopia: “Alternative Basic Education keeps Pastoral Children’s Dreams Alive”, 19 June 2006.)



GIRLS' CLUBS PROJECT: GHANA

The "Girls' Club" project is an innovative approach adopted by the World University Service of Canada and the Ghana Education Service to address some of the challenges facing girls' education in northern Ghana in pursuit of the Education for All (EFA) goals. The underlying idea of the project is to empower teenage girls in deprived communities to effectively assert their rights to education and create learning opportunities for their illiterate parents on the most critical religious, cultural and social factors constraining the education for girls.

These clubs, established in some 200 basic schools in northern Ghana bring girls together as a vulnerable group to address numerous challenges confronting them at school and at home in the pursuit of their education. Club members use their knowledge and newly acquired skills to organize open learning activities at the community level for parents and other community members, through street drama, role-plays, role modelling and posters. In this way, club members are given the opportunity to learn and share their learning with their own parents and peers, voice their opinions, find solutions to challenges facing them at school and at home, and learn from other role models outside their classroom.

Significant successes have been chalked in beneficiary communities which have recorded tremendous increases in enrolment and retention rates of girls in schools. Beneficiary girls also perform better academically and are usually able to qualify for entry into secondary institutions. A further exploration of this initiative and the adoption of other innovative OPEN LEARNING approaches using modern Information and Communication Technologies could contribute to the achievement of the EFA goals.

The activities organised in Girls' Club include broadly:

- Activities to sensitize and build the self-esteem of girls themselves; and
- Activities to sensitize community members on the importance of girl-child education.

Before girls can reach out to their parents and other community members they must first be convinced of the importance of their education and of the education of other girls in their communities. Examples of sensitization activities aimed at girls themselves include visits to potential work environments, talks by professional women working in or from their community, child and girls rights, science education, reproductive health education, life skills, health and HIV/AIDS education and stories, songs and poems about the importance of girls' education. Girls must also have the self-esteem and assertiveness to speak out with confidence. Because self-esteem is often lacking in these girls, many of the Girls Club activities are aimed at building self-esteem. Activities to help build the girls' self-esteem include quiz competitions (with other clubs or with boys from their school), awards ceremonies recognizing girls who do well, counselling and group discussions on topics affecting girls (sexual harassment, personal hygiene, unequal distribution of household tasks...).

The girls' clubs are run by adult mentors and are designed to provide safe environments where girls can build support networks with peers and develop positive relationships with adults. The clubs meet regularly in spaces provided by the schools or by local communities. An organized informal education programme provides engaging structured learning opportunities for club participants.



Established girls' clubs have executive committees and club members hold regular meetings. Minutes of the meetings are documented and activities are well organized. It has been observed that the active participation of girls in club activities for a full academic year increases their self-esteem and confidence. This is manifest in a more active participation in science and mathematics and their willingness to take on more leadership roles.

(Source: Extracted from "GIRLS' CLUBS": An Innovative Approach to Girls' Education in Northern Ghana.)

Lessons learned

- There has been significant improvement in self-esteem and confidence in girls' abilities as community change agents due to exposure and inclusion in co-curricular activities, in retention of girls in school as a result of increased knowledge of their right to education and participation in "Gils' Club" activities, and in girls' performance as a result of additional literacy skills acquired during reading sessions and performance of sketches and drama in public places. The project has been successful in reducing traditional practices harmful to girls' education such as elopement and early marriage.
- However, the quality and quantity of activities directed at educating community members is directly proportionate to the level of dedication of the volunteer matrons and patrons. Therefore extra care should be taken in selecting them and equipping them for the community sensitization aspect of the girls' clubs to maximize the open learning impact of the clubs. Clubs also require the support of head teachers therefore they should also be trained in the formation and running of the clubs. The leadership of the clubs (presidents, secretaries) is important to be cultivated.

STORY 4 GHANA

Girls' clubs in northern Ghana teach girls about their rights and help motivate them to stay in school and how to say "NO" to forced marriage.

Imagine being locked up against your will in a dark room, fed little and with no hope of escape unless you agreed to marry a man you had never met. This is exactly what happened to Jenny*, a 17 year old girl living in northern Ghana. Perhaps more upsetting is that Jenny's incarceration was done so with the full support of her family.

Jenny refused to marry, so she was kept locked up until friends and club leaders from her VSO-supported girls' club, assisted by the police, were able to free her.

Forced marriage in Ghana

Early and forced marriage is illegal in Ghana. Yet it is still common practice – particularly in poor and rural areas.

Girls' clubs

As part of our work supporting vulnerable children to access education in Ghana VSO works alongside local partner, Link Community Development, to run girls' clubs.

(Source: VSO International: "Fighting poverty through volunteering", 29 June, 2016.)



“Children can attend on a weekly basis and as part of the numerous activities, members are taught their rights, the benefits of staying in education and the issues of early marriage. On top of this local women who've succeeded in their careers—or who were married young themselves – mentor the girls and keep them motivated to complete their education”.

In Talensi and Nabdan districts, VSO and Link Community Development run 40 girls' clubs with a membership of over 2,000 school-aged girls attending on a regular basis.

(Source: VSO International: “Fighting poverty through volunteering”, 29 June, 2016.)

EDUCATE GIRLS (EG): INDIA

Educate Girls (EG) is a project of Foundation To Educate Girls Globally (FEGG). Established in 2007, Educate Girls is holistically tackling issues at the root cause of gender inequality in India's education system that has helped to ensure over 90% enrolment and higher attendance as well as improved school infrastructure, quality of education and learning outcomes for all girls.

By collaborating with organizations like UNICEF, Pratham, Sandhan and Dasra, Educate Girls has included their best practices into the programme. Educate Girls' comprehensive model helps communities assess their school situation, initiate action plans and empowers them to sustain positive results at the lowest cost. By leveraging the government's existing investment in schools, Educate Girls delivers measurable results to a large number of beneficiaries and avoids duplication or parallel delivery of services.

Educate Girls believes that if girls in educationally backward districts are educated now, they will have the potential to enter the formal economy, gain employment and lift their families out of poverty. Because of the sustainability and scalability of the model, Educate Girls has grown from a 500-school pilot project in the Pali district of Rajasthan to now serving thousands of schools, reaching millions of children in some of India's most remote and vulnerable areas.

Current estimates show 3 million girls out-of-school in India. Estimates also show that for every 100 girls in rural India only one girl reaches class 12. In Rajasthan province, an impoverished province of India, more than 350,000 girls are out-of-school where 40% girls leave school before reaching the Grade V, only 15% children in primary schools can read a story in Hindi Language and 15% are married before the legal age.

The Educate Girl initiative “mobilises communities to take a stand against gender disparity, working directly with governments, schools, parents, village leaders, and Team Balika (community volunteers) to reverse these statistics and ensure access to quality education”.

The key intervention of the approach to work in around 12000+ schools across 8000+ villages in Ajmer, Bhilwara, Bundi, Jalore, Jhalawar, Pali, Rajsamand, Sirohi and Udaipur districts of Rajasthan and Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh, India

The underlying premise is: “by empowering village communities to improve the quality of girls' education and infrastructure in their government schools, more girls can be educated on larger scales. If more girls are educated, then their health, income levels and overall livelihoods improve, bringing about social transformation”.



The model followed by the Educate Girl relies primarily on creating community ownership through (i) Team Balika (girls volunteers from the community); (ii) community-led enrolment plans; (iii) school management committees; (iv) creative learning and teaching techniques and classroom support; and (v) creation of girl leaders with a view to increasing girls' enrolment and retention and improving their learning outcomes.

The project has been successful in:

- Benefiting over 3.8 million people.
- Increasing girls' enrolment and retention to over 90% and 93% respectively.
- Enrolling over 110,000 out-of-school girls in schools.
- Increasing by 25%–43% the learning outcomes across Hindi, English and Mathematics in 6 districts of Rajasthan province.
- Training over 8,000 Team Balika members working in their communities.
- Covering 12,000 schools in over 8,000 villages.

(Source: Adapted from <http://educategirls.in/What-We-Do.aspx#current-situation>.)

Lessons learned

- More instructional time is spent on traditional teaching practices (listening, reading aloud etc.) and this trend increases even more from grade 2 to grade 6. Less classroom time is spent on child-centred practices such as active learning, discussion, projects and creative activities etc.
- The model has tried to address these issues through Creative Learning Teaching (CLT) and introduced child-centric teaching and learning processes. The results have been encouraging, showing a positive impact on student learning.
- The processes followed are fully child-centric teaching and learning processes. They comprise the strategies for community mobilization and ensure their participation in project activities.
- Girls have become agents of change after realizing the value, necessity and benefits of education. They have reached out to their friends and relatives, ensuring that other girls will also benefit. Bal Sabhas (Children Groups) and life skills classes have instilled confidence and zeal in girls who are now better equipped to cope with the challenges of life.
- Some of the major challenges faced by EG were unavailability of timely support and also a lack of dedicated and responsible people to facilitate government aspects. The shortage of teachers, especially female teachers, has been one of the major reasons for low enrolment of girls in the project schools. Lack of facilities and girl friendly schools is the biggest hindrance to getting girls back to school. It has also been difficult for EG to motivate teachers to introduce new teaching techniques and continue using them.



STORY 5 INDIA

“If Educate Girls hadn’t helped me get back to school I would have got married soon and been doing household work forever!” Naringi says.

As the eldest of her sisters, it fell to Naringi to take care of the household chores when her mother was hospitalized last year. “My parents didn’t think I should be in school anyway so I stayed at home and did all the housework. I was so unhappy staying back, away from my friends. I was convinced that school was the right place for me to be.”

“Educate Girls worked with respected people in my village to convince my dad to let me re-enrol. I was so happy to be back at school! I love studying and being with my friends again.”

Naringi’s mother is still not well so she gets up early and works late to have time for cooking, cleaning and fetching water along with her schoolwork. “Housework has always been a burden for me,” she says.

Naringi hopes her education will help her escape this daily struggle. “I will continue to work hard to educate myself. I want to get a job when I am older, like the lady teacher at my school. I will be able to earn something to support myself and bring a good name to my family through my efforts. If I achieve all these things, I will not have to work so hard in the house!”

(Source: Adapted from <http://educategirls.ngo/blog/index.php/education-gives-suhani-the-freedom-of-choice/>)

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS THROUGH MOBILE TECHNOLOGY: MYANMAR

This ICT for education project, as part of the Connect To Learn initiative in Myanmar launched by Ericsson, the UK Department of International Development (DFID) and other project partners including UNESCO, will not only serve to promote mobile technology for learning but also serve as another important milestone for the Ministry of Education in the education reform process in Myanmar. This project aims to improve learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy of approximately 21,000 Grades 8 to 11 students, half of whom are considered to be marginalized girls in the country. The project partners will also provide up to 600 scholarships to girls to help them stay in school and complete their secondary education. Ericsson, as a donor, provides UNESCO with funding of about USD 1.4 million for this ICT for education project.

The project in its first phase targets to connect 17 selected schools in Mandalay Region to mobile broadband networks so that students can experience 21st century education. These schools will be provided with ICT solutions such as laptop computers, tablet computers and other ICT peripherals delivered in tandem with a comprehensive in-service teacher professional development programme to enable teachers to best utilize this technology in the classroom to enhance teaching quality. The project also includes an English language programme and life skills programme using mobile technology to develop English language and life skills, particularly for girls, as a means of empowerment and a pathway to increased secondary school retention. In the second phase, the project will expand to cover 14 more schools in Bago Region and Mon State.



UNESCO is the lead partner for coordination with the Ministry of Education as well as the implementing partner for the three main components in this project which focus on utilizing mobile broadband technology to provide (1) teacher professional development programme, including ICT-pedagogy integration training and support to teachers; (2) English language programme, including the development and delivery of practical English learning content using mobile technology; and (3) life skills programme, including the development and delivery of relevant life skills learning content using mobile technology.

In addition to UNESCO, a number of partners are involved in the implementation of the Connect To Learn project in Myanmar. These partners include UK Department for International Development (DFID) providing project funding under the Girls' Education Challenge, Ericsson being a donor and overall programme and technology lead and Earth Institute at Columbia University managing the student stipend and school grants programme as well as conducting implementation research at the schools. Five, an innovative start-up at Lund University in Sweden, will provide child-friendly computing solutions while EduEval Educational Consultancy will conduct monitoring and evaluation. Qualcomm® Wireless Reach™ will also provide funding and project management. Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications (MPT) is supporting network rollout and will provide SIM cards for the schools.

The project also receives support from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology in Myanmar.

(Source: News from UNESCO Bangkok.)

Lessons learned

- Unique features of the project include portability, relative affordability, discreteness, potential content richness, wide-use and increasing social acceptability, and one-to-one learning advantages.
- Equal access to, ownership of, and control over mobile phones is protected as a basic human right in policy statements in order to avoid excluding females from emerging learning and empowerment opportunities enabled by mobile technologies.
- The project considers the educational (and contextual, including social, psychological and physical) needs first, then, how and in what way technology can most appropriately fit those needs.
- Critical Barriers include effective pedagogies for specific contexts and needs, determination of useful indicators to measure the effectiveness of programmes (for example, learner attendance, participation, academic performance) and teachers' quality assurance. Mobiles can assist teachers, but they cannot transform poor teaching into good teaching. Reinforce the capacity of teachers before programme implementation.

**STORY 6** MYANMAR

In April 2014, with a new country manager on board, Destiny Rescue Myanmar was a fledgling rescue operation. We had two staff members, a houseful of girls...and little else. We immediately identified and prioritized projects for funding from our funding nations and had them posted on the website. Then, we waited...and watched in anticipation for donors eager to fund us! Some of those projects remained on the website for a few weeks; others remained for a few months.

Computer lab

Several months ago we recognized a need for a computer lab—two or three computers that would afford girls seeking computer training a place to practice their newly acquired skills. Because of the generosity of one donor who felt moved to help in the advancement of education and training, it wasn't long before three girls were able to attend computer classes, then return "home" to practice what they had learned. This lovely senior lady sold something of value to her, but she sold it believing that rescued girls in our care would benefit from its monetary value more than she would by keeping it. Soon, three more girls will be able to receive similar computer training—something they never could have dreamed possible in their previous lives.

The girls were clamouring for an opportunity to learn basic sewing skills, but... we had no sewing machines! We even had a skilled seamstress available to provide training, but...no machines! Again, because several individuals were moved by the invitation to partner in a project, we were able to equip our project with three treadle sewing machines. Girls are now queued up, waiting their turns at 3-month stints to learn the basics. We will soon purchase three additional machines for a new class of beginners. The sound of treadles whirring is the sound of destinies waiting to be met!

Scholarship for tailor training

Perhaps you are one of several donors who contributed to Bee*, the young woman who was the first to join us in the Myanmar rescue project. After having spent 18 months in our care, she clung to aspirations of being trained as a tailor. Today, Bee is diligently pursuing her dream, made possible because generous donors made it possible to grant her a scholarship that pays for her tuition, the "latest" model Singer treadle machine, sewing accessories, and fabric. When Bee finishes her course, she will know how to design clothes, draft patterns, select fabrics, and construct clothing to the standards of the finest dressmakers. With her machine, her skills, and an indomitable spirit, she will be able step with confidence into a future that holds a promise she never dared to dream, let alone fully grasp

(Source: Reflection from Myanmar, Latest News, 17 December, 2014.)



BREAKING THE MOLD OF GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES: NEPAL

In Nepal, two local NGOs are breaking the mold of girls' empowerment initiatives. Women LEAD is the first and only organization in Nepal specifically focused on long-term leadership development for girls. Since 2011, they have empowered over 500 young leaders in Nepal with the skills, support and opportunities to become leaders in their schools, communities and nation. The organization reaches out and trains young women with different backgrounds who want to make a difference for Nepal. Women LEAD is based on the principles of local ownership, inclusivity of both girl and boys, and girl-leadership—all of the organization's staff are under 25 years old and include programme alumni. Participants learn from their peers in a creative space, unlike the Nepali rote style of learning that is taught in classrooms across the country.

Her Turn offers a different approach to the discrimination, inequality, and security of rural girls in Nepal. They offer four-week education and empowerment programme for girls from rural communities. Child-centred and interactive workshops are conducted daily by local female trainers. First they cover girl-specific health and safety issues, and then shift focus on developing confidence, public speaking and leadership skills. By the end of the workshops, the girls agree upon and implement a community project. Her Turn is innovative in putting girls at the centre of the decision-making process, empowering girls in particular to take control of decisions about their own life. One 13-year-old participant proudly declared by the end of the programme, "When I grow up, I want to be a nurse. I'm studying hard to achieve this goal. Even if it will be difficult to become a nurse, I won't give up. I will invest in my education and work hard to become a nurse".

(Source: UNGEI: Innovative Solutions: Breaking the Mold of Girls' Empowerment Initiatives.)

Lessons learned

- While the strategies followed in these two joint initiatives present a broad range of approaches to girls' education, leadership, empowerment and community development, a single common thread binds them together—each strategy is an effort to shift the identity of girls and women from beneficiaries to key actors in shaping their future.
- The capacity-building programme is unique and includes topics such as team building and decision-making, self-discovery, girls' personal safety and self-defence, environmental awareness, community involvement, career guidance and skills development, all adapted to the local context.
- After being trained as leaders, the girls are now serving as key informants and role models for siblings and peers within and outside of school in persuading and sharing with girls' parents and community leaders to free their girls to go to school (UNESCO: 2015).

**STORY 7** **NEPAL**

When Pema walked into the Women LEAD office for her interview, she was filled with the same nervous jitters that filled most short-listed candidates vying for the limited spots in our rigorous, year-long LEAD Course. “My English skills are not so good, so even though I have had lots of practice with interviews, sometimes I cannot communicate myself,” she recalled. Despite her limited English skills, it soon became clear that Pema was the remarkable type of young women we look for.

During her interview, Pema talked about a Nepal where everyone—regardless of class, caste, and gender—is able to move forward and achieve his or her dreams. She described a Nepal that is financially stable where every citizen has access to quality education and healthcare. Good leaders, she said, did not simply work for their own benefit. “I am from a rural area and I have seen the situation of women there. I have seen how they struggle. I want to be a leader to help all the young women and girls in my community achieve their dreams,” she told her interviewers.

Pema has already shown her potential as an emerging leader in her community in Women LEAD’s two-week Leadership Institute. In each session, Women LEAD inculcates in our participants, or “LEADers,” the tools and skills they need to become change makers in their communities. In our Change maker activity—where we challenged pairs of LEADers to create the biggest impact they could with 200 rupees (roughly two dollars)—Pema and her partner decided to invest their money on school supplies for a small school boy. During a session on public speaking, Pema was the first to volunteer and give a two-minute speech in front of her peers. “Women LEAD Nepal is pushing myself to go beyond my limit and my comfort zone,” she said.

Pema’s Women LEAD journey has just begun. After the Leadership Institute ends this Friday, she will “pay it forward” by taking the knowledge and skills she has learned and empowering other girls and boys through a four-month School Leadership Programme (SLP). Pema will spend over 150 hours in trainings, planning, and conducting sessions for the middle school students in her programme. We’ll also help her develop her confidence and self-esteem and pair her up with both a mentor and a language tutor who will help her improve her English, which she has specifically requested.

(Source: Global Giving: Empower 300 girls to become leaders in Nepal.)

ROOM TO READ: SRI LANKA

Room to Read, started in 2000, is an education-focused nongovernmental organization that works in collaboration with local communities, partner organizations, and governments to improve children’s learning. It does so through literacy and girls’ education programming that focuses on systemic changes within schools during two periods that are particularly critical in a child’s schooling: early primary school for literacy acquisition and secondary school for girls’ education.



Room to Read's Literacy Programme, the focus of this case study, is an intervention based in primary school that ensures that schools have a structured library with books in the children's local languages; trains teachers and librarians in scientifically based instructional methods in reading and writing; and engages families, communities, and government leaders in the school's reform efforts.

Room to Read's Literacy Programme works in conjunction with Sri Lankan existing language curricula and includes detailed lesson plans, classroom materials, and comprehensive professional development resources for teachers. Literacy coaches are placed in classrooms alongside teachers to provide instructional support throughout the intervention, and library activities are integrated to create environments that promote reading. Through structured monitoring processes, literacy coaches provide teachers with actionable feedback to improve their teaching methods and assess their students' reading improvement over time, while library management facilitators provide similar feedback to librarians. Together, these efforts seek to develop children's reading skills and their habit of reading so that they become lifelong, independent readers.

Between 2013 and 2015, Room to Read instituted a series of programmatic improvements, including the introduction of family and community engagement guidelines to help schools increase parental support and involvement in their children's reading; stronger coordination between the Literacy Programme's reading instruction and school library components; and packages to promote more consistent implementation approaches (i.e., training to librarians) for all its libraries.

(Source: Extracted from "ROOM TO READ" scaling up Literacy through Localized Solutions across Asia and Africa, Centre for Universal Education, Brookings.)

Lessons learned

- Schools have been transformed into vibrant, child-friendly, and book-rich environments. Teachers have been trained on best practices in reading and writing instruction, and library management.
- While driven by goals such as reaching the un-reached children particularly the girls, the project is equally driven by the data supporting and monitoring those goals to ensure that the project is truly impacting children's lives—transforming them for the better.
- Room to Read uses an innovative approach - phonics-based approach - to teach early grade literacy and uses fluency as a measurement of reading skills—namely, a fluency metric that indicates how quickly and accurately someone reads, which aids in comprehension.
- Nine of the top-10 titles in Sinhala-language libraries and six of the top-10 titles in Tamil-language libraries were folklore and fantasy having more appealing characters, particularly animals who take on human traits.



STORY 8 SRI LANKA

These disadvantaged children often grow up to be disadvantaged fathers and mothers,” said Ranjani, a social mobilizer, or mentor, in Room to Read Sri Lanka’s Girls’ Education Programme. “In most cases, the girls drop out of school and marry young because their families can no longer provide for them.”

Four years ago, best friends Prashanthi and Mogandashi, both raised in the “line-room” slums of Hatton’s tea estates, faced a similar fate. At 14 years old they had to drop out of school to help their families survive and didn’t have much more to look forward to than an early marriage. But what happens when girls like Prashanthi and Mogandashi are given a chance at education and the support they need to finish school?

“She wouldn’t let me drop out”

The programme, which helps ensure girls can stay in school and complete their secondary education, provided Prashanthi with funding for transportation, pens, books, and even meals, as well as life skills education and continued support from Ranjani. Five years later Prashanthi graduated from school and is hoping to start at the university next year. “Throughout the programme, Room to Read helped me realize the value of education, how it could help me help my family. It was a difficult time for me,” Prashanthi said through her tears, “but I did it!”

“My life changed”. “Room to Read came into my life and provided the support I needed,” said she. She is now a proud graduate of secondary school and is determined to go to university next year to become a bank manager. “This way I hope to earn enough so my father can retire,” she said. “My dream is to be able to support my parents.”

The impact of an individual

Inspired by their social mobilizers and teachers, Prashanthi and Mogandashi began tutoring the children in the estate slums.

“Room to Read helped me realize the impact an individual can have on a child, and this inspired me to encourage the children in my community to study,” said Prashanthi, who juggles tutoring with her chores as well as the computer and English courses she’s taking in preparation for university. Over 20 children crowd into her small room and sit on floor mats, but neither they nor Prashanthi seem to mind.

The ripple effect

In only four years, Prashanthi went from being 14-year-old dropouts to the first in their families to graduate secondary school. Today she is creating a better life for her family and a better way for her community by passing on her love of learning.

The good news is that Prashanthi is far from being outliers. Educating girls has an empowering effect on her community because girls reinvest their knowledge and income back into their families and communities, helping to bring an end to poverty for themselves and for the world.

(Source: Room to Read: How Two Girls from Sri Lanka’s Plantation Slums Went From Dropping Out of School to Passing on Their Love of Learning, November 04, 2015.)



INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: UZBEKISTAN

The Human Dynamics (HD) assisted project on “Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs in Uzbekistan” started its operations in March 2014. Its main purpose is to enhance the quality of the services offered in the area of inclusive education in Uzbekistan. This two-years project is designed to contribute to educational and social inclusion of children with special needs, promoting inclusive society; and increasing lives in dignity.

The project contributes to the social inclusion in Uzbekistan, specifically by improving the quality of education for children with special needs aged 2–10 and promoting their integration into the mainstream kindergartens and primary schools in Uzbekistan. This project responds to a need for support to the Government of Uzbekistan’s legal, financial and technical frameworks regarding the development of an Inclusive Education system as a major component of enhanced overall social inclusion.

Overall, the project recognises that reshaping the education system, and moving special needs children into the mainstream education system, requires new institutional strengths and greater inclusivity across society: i.e. the complete disaggregation of education requires changes in both education delivery and perceptions of disability, including broad support and increased public awareness. Also, the complexity of work toward inclusive education requires a great deal of coordination and shared responsibilities from all stakeholders. Finally, ensuring that the country's education system is able to satisfy the requirements of these international obligations is another important part of the work that Human Dynamics undertakes within this project.

The expected project results are linked to three areas: (1) Legislative—a long-term strategy, including legal and financial frameworks of the government formulated to ensure equal and inclusive approaches for children with special needs; (2) Capacity—pre-service and in-service teacher training and non-teacher staff training modules on inclusive education updated and integrated in curricula and training programmes; and (3) Awareness—public awareness in the country raised to promote the integration of children and people with special needs, both at social and education level.

For the girls with special needs education, the project emphasises on the need for girls to live in a family environment and to be educated with their peers in order to develop emotionally and socially. The approach followed ensures that a disabled girl can attend a neighbourhood school, that a girl with a learning disability has the special assistance needed for them to learn to read, and that a girl with poor school attendance can be helped to return to school.

The strategies for addressing girl students’ special education needs and characteristics consider their economic needs as well, including government stipends for subsidized school fees and costs of school uniforms. Flexible curriculum approaches are also being adopted that allow girl students to be at home at times they are needed for household chores and/or to work in order to generate family income.

The project has organised several training and capacity building workshops. The important achievements of this project, so far, include:



- Successful cooperation at the central and local level between the project team and the Uzbek authorities has resulted in the first draft of the National Strategy on Inclusive Education 2015—2017 being elaborated. This is an important step in the discussion of how to move together toward greater inclusiveness.
- A pilot project to incorporate 200 previously uneducated children with special needs into 50 pilot schools and two kindergartens has at this time culminated in the inclusion in 'inclusive groups/classes' of 800 children for the 2015–16 education year. The pilot institutions have been selected following a tailored questionnaire that carefully analyses their capacity to incorporate children with special needs. The pilot schools will test a pedagogy methodology package on Inclusive Education designed by the team specifically for the Uzbek context.
- A custom training package has been developed to increase the capacity of teachers to manage the classroom and educate children with special needs. Human Dynamics are providing both in-service training, training trainers that will work with teachers and creating resource centres. These resource centres will provide tools for teachers to use to apply inclusive practices in their classroom.
- Summer School in inclusive practices has been delivered in the pilot regions to prepare teachers for the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream education groups/classes.
- A separate training programme has been implemented for specialists in Uzbekistan's psychological-medical commissions to appropriately assess children with special needs.
- The next step in training is to target specialists in the design, management and review of individual education plans.
- A comprehensive public awareness campaign has been launched, building on the project's already significant presence in Uzbek media. The production is pending of a short film to promote social inclusion in Uzbek society.

(Source: adapted from "Human Dynamics" TA to the project "Inclusive education for children with special needs in Uzbekistan", May 2016, <http://www.humandynamics.org/en/news/mr-maros-sefcovic-visits-inclusive-education-school>.)

Lessons learned

- Uzbekistan pre-primary and primary levels of education have been successful reshaped the education system by moving special needs children into the mainstream education through new institutional strengths and greater inclusivity across society: i.e. the complete disaggregation of education by introducing changes in both education delivery and perceptions of disability, including broad support and increased public awareness.
- For inclusive education to be successful a great deal of coordination and shared responsibilities from all stakeholders is required. Finally, the strategy ensuring how a country's education system could be able to satisfy the requirements of the international obligations is another important feature of this project.



3.4 Concluding Remarks

In the Sub-Saharan African and Asian regions, the importance of educating girls has been extensively researched and documented. It is enshrined in international commitments, and international and regional attention has led to improvements in some aspects of girls' education. However, much remains to be done to meet the goals of gender parity that the Governments have committed to in girls' education.

The chapter highlighted the progress of girls' education against the key EFA indicators, pointing to some of the advancements made and gaps that still exist. It explored that in the Sub-Saharan African and Asian countries considered in this report, and with only a few exceptions, girls fare well than boys at primary level of education, however, at the secondary and tertiary levels gender disparity continues to persist but girls are catching up since 2000 for all gender-related indicators for which data are available. While data collection along these lines has improved in recent years—in part because of increased donor and government interest—the chapter found that there still remains a general lack of data not only disaggregated by sex, but also by rural and urban areas. This has an impact on our global ability to confidently monitor progress toward the gender parity in all countries, urban and rural, and particularly where progress is needed most.

The chapter also highlighted that despite progress in recent years, girls continue to suffer severe disadvantage and exclusion in education systems throughout their lives and how the barriers (dowry, neglect, infanticide and sex-selective abortion, abuse, child labour, and sex trafficking) to schooling have kept girls trapped in vicious circles of vulnerability and poverty. It outlined a selected number of innovative approaches and success stories extracted and/or adapted from several projects on girls' education underway in these countries that have proven successful in addressing the constraints to girls' education.

The analysis revealed that an absence of girl-friendly schools, violence in and outside school, weak legislation to eliminate gender-based violence and discrimination, absence of gender sensitive curricula and teaching and learning materials for gender sensitivity and gender equality and an adequate supply of quality teachers with particular focus on female teachers deserve particular attention. Strategic focus areas for moving forward include access of the most marginalised girls (migrants, conflict/war-affected, orphans, girls' parents with HIV/AIDS), low retention and transition to post-primary education and improving the quality of education they receive.

Attempting to tackle these issues and barriers to gender equality in education requires a holistic and coordinated approach within schools, across the education system and within communities and wider society. Considering the next strategic steps for progressing girls' education in these countries raises three areas where progress is required and where identified barriers to girls' education interact and are particularly acute: socio-cultural, economic and political challenges. There is a clear causality between educational attainment and improvement across other areas—health, income, self-confidence, knowledge of rights and entitlements—and interestingly, these impacts persist with future generations.

Chapter four suggests some key recommendations to address these issues through strategic interventions that aim to create conditions for the elimination of gender disparities and to promote girls' education and development.



CHAPTER FOUR:

SETTING THE BEYOND 2015 AGENDA: ORCHESTRATING FOR THE FUTURE

4.0 REACHING THE UNREACHED

The quantitative analysis presented in Chapter II showed that all the developing countries are pretty close to achieving the EFA quantitative goals—they have come a long way but not there yet. There is no single country in the world where girls and women in the world have achieved full equality with boys and men (OECD: 2013). There are still noticeable intra-country disparities among regions, social group, minorities, migrants, urban, deprived and differently abled population groups. That in itself should be enough to underscore the need to keep a strong focus on gender equality and girl's rights in the development agenda beyond 2015.

We also observed that the challenge of out-of-school children is pervasive. Reaching out-of-school children, particularly girls, will take special efforts, beyond what typically thought of as scaling up. Completion and retention at primary level implies getting children from society's impoverished and marginalised populations. Most parents of out-of-school children live at bare subsistence level in abject poverty. They are uneducated and illiterate. Their children are less likely to enrol, more likely to dropout, and more likely to join child labour or do domestic chores that keep them away from schooling. In almost all the countries considered in this report, girls are less likely to be in school than boys. EFA goals cannot be realised unless governments address the specific reasons that poor children and girls do not attend school, repeat grades, and dropout.

For addressing these challenges, developing countries will have to take a disaggregated action and targeted investment that take rigorously into account the learning needs of difficult groups living in difficult areas. They have to move beyond counting numbers—getting children to school is not enough? They have to understand their roles in school—what do we do in the school and understand firmly that learning and exclusion are not unrelated subjects. They have to focus on the phenomenon of “silent exclusion”.

There is an urgent need to shift our focus and broaden the scope of education—what we offer in harmony with changing demands and expectations of the globalized society. Each country must see how they can pursue a transformative goal and not mere expansion but create new pathways inside and out side the school.

There are three ways in which policy-makers can stimulate higher levels of participation and retain children till they complete successfully schooling: (i) focusing on specific interventions to reaching the unreachable



children, (ii) introducing and/or expanding the diverse educational opportunities (formal and non-formal education delivery modes) for girls and women, and (iii) ensuring increased transition to post-primary levels of education. The three approaches relate specifically to the demand-side effects that impinge the propensity of parents and communities to send their children to school. The supply-side interventions are equally important. They comprise basically school infrastructure and meals.

Taking action on girls' education should not be considered as an exclusive responsibility of governments or bilateral and multilateral donor agencies. It should, however, be seen in broader spectrum and should include civil society networks, business leaders, media organizations, academia, social enterprises, philanthropic communities, religious entities and individual global champions as all have a role to play. With this in mind, the following recommendations are proposed for action.

4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Focus on girls' and women leadership

Girl's leadership teaches the skills to be brave, resilient and connected, equipping girls to make change in their world. A girl leader should be an active learner who believes that she can make a difference in her world, and acts individually and with others to bring about positive change.

For realising the leadership quality among the adolescent girls, governments should design a roadmap to change that not only values the role primary school education has in girl's life at this stage but also her ability and readiness to engage in structured activities that build her leadership skills. These two elements should be combined together to develop the kinds of leadership competencies one expects to see in young girl leaders—voice/assertion, confidence, decision-making, organization and vision. At the same time, these skills must be reinforced and multiplied with a view to having a real effect on girls' leadership development. For creating the supportive relations and enabling environment for girls, advocacy campaigns should be organised to inform and sensitise them about their rights, gender equality and transforming gender dynamics.

Elizabeth and Rebecca (2015) propose a mentorship model be used with either teachers or recent secondary school girl graduates and that the initiative be scaled up with diverse partners starting in countries where girls' education is the most behind.

Recommendation 2: Expand early child care and education and post-primary education

For the girls in marginalised groups, typical primary school may be too late to begin. ECCE, nutrition, health and school participation are emerging as critical factors. The current level of emphasis on pre-school education and child-care is not adequate. While developing ECCE provisions, government in developing countries should recognise the vast linguistic diversity that characterise our countries. It should be treated as an asset and not a handicap. For this, governments should refresh their thinking and views on language of learning.

Similarly, with the increasing demand for primary education, it is certain that the existing post-primary education system in developing countries is unlikely to offer enough learning places for graduates unless facilities are expanded at a regular pace. Government should plan in advance adequate funding for post-primary education in addition to spending needed to provide universal access to good quality primary education. Donors should provide additional financing for post-primary schooling in developing countries.



Recommendation 3: Make schooling free

Elimination or reduction in school fees is one of the proven successful strategies to compensate for the financial burden of substantially increasing enrolment of children of poor parents. This has a particular impact on girls, as economically driven decisions for poor families usually favour sending boys to school because of the perceived and real future economic and social benefits.

Laws and legislations making schooling free should be enacted and promulgated strictly along with educational reforms that focus on quality improvements and replacement financing for sustaining enrolment and increasing completion rates. However, experience shows that eliminating fees will not help poor families unless more equitable and efficient sources of financing are provided, either by transferring district, provincial, or central government funds to the local level or by providing funding from locally raised revenues, something that occurs only rarely.

Finally, in countries yet to introduce conditional cash transfers and school vouchers, possibility of introducing such schemes particularly directed for girls should be looked at as a means for reducing the financial burden of poor parents.

Recommendation 4: Improve institutional practices for better performance

At the institutional level, it is high time that developing countries should think towards creating “New Generation Schools”—schools that provide inclusive learning spaces that value diversity, help develop among children “learning to learn” skills which are easily adaptive to fast changing demands of the work place. For this to achieve, developing countries will have to integrate work place skills especially for girls in school curriculum—skills which foster their ability to move seamlessly between work and learning. The premise of education will have to go beyond the boundaries of school and college—it should entail life-long learning. This requires rethinking towards developing a new framework for youth literacy and adult education.

Increased focus on learning is critical but mere external testing may not aid improved teaching and learning. It may undermine initiatives for change and innovation. Thus schools will have to return to the “drawing board” for reforming both curriculum and teaching. Planners and policy-makers will have to look at learning in a more holistic manner and contextualised manner and not simply as test scores.

Research has shown that girls' survival and performance in schools improve when teachers use girl-friendly curriculum-delivery strategies that specifically address their needs, when the school environment is positive, and when parents are involved in their education.

For achieving these objectives, every effort should be made in building and strengthening institutional capacities to envision and strategize action. It has to happen in each single country particularly in the Sub-Saharan African countries so as to minimise learning from external consultants. They should create an empirical knowledge base on education. They should make investment to develop “High End Human Resources” who can innovate, lead and take on new challenges.

In planning improvements in institutional practices, therefore, ministries of education should ensure that schools establish key priorities in (a) curriculum delivery, (b) school environment, and (c) parental involvement.



Recommendation 4.1 Deliver curriculum and eliminate gender bias from textbooks and learning materials

Curriculum is the foundation of the education system and the principal is the curriculum leader in school. For an effective delivery of curriculum, principals, teachers, parents, and other community members must understand the expectations set out by the ministry and how well the students, particularly girls in their school are achieving those expectations.

A common curriculum for topics that directly affect students' life including gender, sexuality, human rights, and life skills education, which uses participatory teaching approaches should be included from the primary school level itself. Such a curriculum should be both region- and culture-specific and should empower both girls and boys with unique tools for making informed decisions across several areas of living such as career and vocational choices, marriage, health, nutrition safety and leadership.

Textbooks should present positive role models for both girls and boys which present girls and boys participating in a variety of roles and activities, including girls' leadership and other positive roles with which they are not traditionally familiar. Textbooks should portray fair sharing of domestic work among family members regardless of sex. Textbooks should depict realistic portrayal of life where girls and boys share the same responsibilities. Non-sexist textbook should reflect professional and technical equity among boys and girls. Along with this it is imperative that while preparing gender sensitive material for school textbooks, inputs from gender experts and those who have struggled to bring women's voices and worldview into the academic mainstream should be included

Recommendation 4.2 Develop school environment and infrastructure

Effective schools share a set of characteristics that add up to an environment that fosters student achievement. By setting goals to improve a school's environment, principals, teachers, school management boards, parents, and other community members can make their schools more effective places in which to learn.

Ministries should develop an effective and conducive school environment comprising: (i) a clear and focused vision; (ii) a safe and orderly environment particularly for girls; (iii) a climate of high expectations for student success; (iv) a focus on quality education and on high levels of student achievement that emphasises activities related to learning; (v) a principal who provides instructional leadership and conversant in school-based management techniques; (vi) a blue print for frequent monitoring of students' progress; and (vii) guidelines for building strong home-school relations.

Recommendation 5: Train and sensitise teachers and administrators

Teachers hold the key. Government should invest in improving the quality of teachers in relation to shortage of quality teachers. There is need to identify a "new paradigm" for teacher preparation. There is also an urgent need for a "Global Mission on Teachers—Teaching and Teacher Education".

High importance and emphasis should be on teachers training, on sensitising about the importance of gender issues and on the fact that it is a long and painful process requiring not only learning of new perspectives but also the unlearning of old ones. Teachers and administrators should undergo gender sensitive courses in classroom-management techniques, that is, teaching-learning process, classroom



behaviour and interaction with students. Teachers should empower students with critical thinking by considering their attitudes and school textbooks from multiple perspectives and alternative dimensions. For this purpose both female and male teachers should be trained on these lines.

Recommendation 6: Together we learn better: promote inclusive schools

“Learning to live together” is not just a contingency goal for meeting the emergent political, social and economic situation in the world. Children’s capability and right attitude to live together in a world underscored by cohabitation of multiple perspectives of religion, culture, language and ideology should be duly recognised in each educational setting. While suggesting policy measures in this direction, we must not forget that in the shrinking world with high migration and urbanization, pluralism and multi-culturalism will be the rule and not an exception.

Thus, the journey to becoming an Inclusive School may be long and challenging at times, but ultimately this journey can strengthen a school community and benefit “all” children (Inclusive Schools Network). “Inclusion” does not simply mean the placement of students with disabilities in general education classes. This process must incorporate fundamental change in the way a school community supports and addresses the individual needs of each child. As such, effective models of inclusive education not only benefit students with disabilities, but also create an environment in which every student, including those who do not have disabilities, has the opportunity to flourish.

For achieving these basic objectives of inclusive education, governments should explore ways in which inclusive educational practices build a school’s capacity to educate all learners effectively in terms of (i) differentiated learning, (ii) academic support for each student access to curriculum, (iii) behavioural supports for maintaining a positive learning environment, (iii) respect for diversity for creating a welcoming environment for all, and (iv) inclusive practices for making effective use of a school’s resources.

Recommendation 7: Integrate technology

“Exclusion from technology places those concerned at a disadvantage in the coming “information society.” It creates an ever larger rift between high society, between high technology and the modernization of the elite on the one hand, and the marginalization of the majority of the population on the other. The haves will be able to communicate around the globe. The have-nots will be consigned to the rural backwater of the information society.” (UNESCO Commission on Culture)

Equity and inclusion cannot be achieved without technology. In all education programmes government should make “Technology for All” as its motto.

Recommendation 8: Increase investment on girls’ education

For having the catalytic effects on the lives of girls and women and for accelerating progress towards achieving gender-related development goals beyond 2015, developing countries should augment investment in the following five policy areas:

- Keeping girls in school to complete a quality secondary education.
- Improving reproductive health, including access to family planning.
- Increasing women’s control over and ownership of assets.



- Supporting girls' and women's leadership and influence.
- Stop violence against girls and women.

These five priorities are interlinked and mutually reinforcing—closing the gender gap in one policy area will have a powerful impact on all others. The link between adolescent girls' education and their sexual and reproductive health is the most compelling of all.

Recommendation 9: Develop international cooperation

Evidence suggests that South-South collaboration has remained rhetorical. This has left tremendous human resource potential within the developing countries (particularly China and India) untapped. Developing countries have failed to benefit from the fast growing economies in changing favourably the economic balance.

In the absence of south-south cooperation and collaboration, the international community should speed up its efforts to support countries that have the largest number of girls out of school. The countries need support to provide good quality education for girls and all children. International efforts should focus on: (i) raising additional resources and directing them to where the need is greatest; (ii) improving the way resources are directed to countries so that they have the greatest possible impact; and (iii) strengthening key international organisations to provide more leadership on girls' education and better support at the country level (DFID).

Recommendation 10: Collect disaggregated student data

A virtual neglect of disaggregated data collection and reporting is the hallmark of most developing countries. Disaggregating student data into sub-populations can help schools and communities plan appropriate programmes, decide which evidence-based interventions to select (i.e. have they been evaluated with the target population), use limited resources where they are needed most, and see important trends in behaviour and achievement. Disaggregated data can show where aggregate data are masking discrepancies.

Thus, within the context of promoting girls' education, the data collection mechanisms of the Ministries of Education should be streamlined for providing measures for a complete understanding of the effectiveness and equity of a programme or ways to view achievement measures in terms of race/ethnicity, immigrant/refugee status, special needs (inclusive education) age group, gender, grade, geographic location (rural-urban), and sexual orientation, that is:

- Gender, rural-urban or racial/ethnic outcome difference among students who participate in a particular evidence-based intervention.
- Girl students in particular grades, with certain programmes (such as education cost compensation, school meals,) or with certain teachers performing better, on average, than other grades.
- High socio-economic status students over-represented in accessing and receiving educational services and provisions.



Based on the disaggregated data, research studies should be carried out at the end of academic year to demonstrate to and sensitise the EFA partners the status of girls' education, patterns that can be masked by larger aggregate data and to ensure transparency and accountability. Looking specifically at sub-populations can help make sure that resources are spent on the areas and students where they are most needed and can have the biggest impact. Perhaps most importantly, governments should use such studies to make wiser future implementation decisions and secure targeted funding opportunities and to look for patterns over time and see if similarities or differences within and among sub-populations are emerging.

To sum up, for getting the poor and marginalised children to schools and keep them there, schools have to be made affordable by reducing the direct costs for all children and by compensating for some of added opportunity costs for girls. Other measures could include conditional cash transfers, school vouchers, scholarships, stipends, bursaries, school feeding and health-related interventions.

4.2 CONCLUSION

Through the rigorous process of setting up girls' education in line with the EFA 2000 Dakar goals and reaching out to millions of out-of-school girls and boys, the nine countries across the Sub-Saharan African and Asian regions have made noticeable progress in meeting and surmounting a number of barriers. Yet there are some that continue to remain at larger issues that affect the lives of thousands of girls and deny them their right to go to school. The evidence presented in this report suggests that some interventions introduced in these countries have met with some success in certain contexts. However, other interventions—though popular—have little evidence to support their extensive use and/or impact.

All the countries have succeeded in almost filling the gender gap at the primary level of education yet in Ethiopia, Ghana, Cambodia, India and Nepal gender gaps remain significantly pronounced at the second level of education. The main causes are cultural and economic. Schools in these countries appear to be insensitive to girls' needs. Irrelevant curricula, discrimination against girls, sexual harassment, violence in and outside school, verbal and physical abuse, a lack of sanitation, and long distances between home and school have all made schooling of girls, particularly in rural areas, a hazardous experience and have deterred parents from sending their daughters to school. Certain cultural practices have also made sending girls to school less desirable.

In many societies, girls are not expected to make economic contributions to their families. Instead, they are expected to care for family members and carry out household chores, tasks for which education is not seen as necessary. Moreover, girls are seen as relatively transitory assets—not worthy of long-term investment—as they leave their parents' household upon marriage. A vicious cycle is thereby created: girls are believed to be less worthy of education so they receive less, which diminishes girls' prospects of closing the gap on boys in the future.

Many conditions are necessary to increase girls' enrolment, retention in, and completion of schooling. Among them, two are key: political will and community involvement. Political will at all levels includes the willingness to build and sustain a strong commitment to ensuring that a high percentage of girls complete the primary cycle and transition to middle school. This political will must be translated into relevant action to create opportunities for girls to complete their schooling, thus taking them one step closer to fulfilling their potential.



In addition to political will, community involvement is necessary to ensure transparency, accountability, and sustainability of interventions. Community members, including parents, teachers, religious leaders, and students themselves, must be involved in the identification of barriers and solutions, as well as in the planning and implementation of strategies that advance girls' education.

Businesses, too, need to change their ways by providing opportunities to adolescent girl graduates, since they are likely to benefit from access to both a deeper pool of well-trained labour and the skills and knowledge girls bring to a task. The experiences of China and India found that gender-biased hiring and pay practices are more common in business enterprises and firms that have little or no competition, but as their economies opened up and grew, employment prospects for girls have been improving thus justifying investment in the education of girls and women.

At the larger level the barriers lie in the sheer absence of statistical data and the attitudes of the policy makers. Education must respond in ways that address these complex interactions and work towards increased data, disaggregated by sex and by location (rural-urban), on the most marginalised groups to ensure that governments and education partners have the evidence and knowledge to identify and respond to these groups' educational needs, and monitor progress against equity-based targets.

Promoting girls' education in those countries where girls' education is at stake, therefore, involves changing attitudes across society as well as spending money on increasing the number of school places available to girls. Donors providing funding for education can help by insisting that their funds are used to educate girls as well as boys. New means of engaging policy makers—perhaps through a bottom-up approach, where pressure is applied by civil society, or through better use of evidence to show the benefits of girls' schooling—may also reap rewards. Religious leaders also need convincing, as do men in general, who are usually the main decision makers within households. Changing cultural attitudes toward women is a slow and difficult process. In China that has succeeded, such changes have typically been made as a result of its Government strong political leadership and commitment.

The strategic interventions discussed in the study present a checklist (see Annex 2 for details) from which educational planners and policy-makers can formulate and craft approaches and solutions appropriate for their national and local contexts. They have to learn lessons that have led to success—sometimes at levels far above what would have been predicted given their economic level—and from those which have failed to yield the expected outcomes and progress.



Annex: 1

The following organizations are devoted to helping educate girls and/or women around the world. Some are large; some small. Some concentrate in one country; others in many. Each has its own area of focus, from cultural exchange, training teachers, providing education, to inspiring participation.

Afghan Institute of Learning	Operates schools and other programmes for women and girls in Afghanistan and in the border areas of Pakistan.
Akili Dada	Dedicated to providing secondary education scholarships, peer/mentorship and leadership training to ensure that the next generation of Kenya's leaders includes women from diverse economic backgrounds.
American Assistance for Cambodia (AAfC)	Has a programme to subsidize poor girls so that they can remain in school.
Asian University for Women	Focuses on educating women from impoverished and less-fortunate nations to help them become the leaders of tomorrow. 98% of its students are enrolled on full scholarship.
BRAC	A Bangladesh-based aid group that recently made a commitment to provide empowering educational opportunities for the most disadvantaged children, especially girls, on a significant scale in Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Southern Sudan.
Camfed	Helps girls in Africa go to school and stay enrolled, from elementary school to college. RSS feed.
CARE	Works alongside communities, governments and partner organizations at many levels to address all aspects of basic education, including training teachers and other school personnel to improve the quality of education.
Central Asia Institute	Founded by Three Cups of Tea author Greg Mortenson, CAI promotes and supports community-based education, especially for girls, in remote regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan.
The Centre for Development and Population Activities	Works in partnership with local leaders and organizations to provide girls with practical, non-formal education in countries around the world.



Commit2Change	Aims to educate girls in orphanages in India. It works with carefully selected local partners who rescue and rehabilitate at-risk girls and invest in initiatives to give them a chance.
Developments in Literacy	Dedicated to providing quality education to disadvantaged children, especially girls, by establishing and operating schools in the underdeveloped regions of Pakistan, with a strong focus on gender equality and community participation.
Educate Girls Globally	Promotes the education of girls in developing countries.
Empower	Gives grants to improve health, education, leadership and economic opportunities for disadvantaged young people (defined by the World Health Organization as ages 10–24) in emerging market countries.
Girl Determined	Works in Burma (Myanmar) with girls in the urban outskirts of the country's two largest cities. Conducts weekly leadership programmes designed to meet the specific needs of the girls served in order to keep them in school, safe from exploitative labour and unmarried until adulthood.
The Girl Effect	The powerful social and economic change brought about when girls have the opportunity to participate. It's an untapped force in the fight against poverty, and it's driven by champions around the globe: the Nike Foundation, the NoVo Foundation, the UN Foundation, the Coalition for Adolescent Girls, CARE, Plan, the Population Council, ICRW and the Centre for Global Development—and many others.
Girl Up	A campaign of the United Nations Foundation, gives American girls the opportunity to raise awareness and funds for UN programmes that help some of the world's hardest-to-reach adolescent girls.
Girls Education International	Dedicated to expanding and supporting educational opportunities for under-served females in remote and undeveloped regions of the world.
Girls Learn International, Inc.	Pairs American middle and high school-based Chapters with international Partner Schools in countries where girls have traditionally been denied access to education in order to: promote cross-cultural understanding; explore issues affecting girls in the context of global human rights; and train girls to be leaders and advocates for positive social change.



Global Campaign for Education	A civil society movement whose mission is to make sure that governments act now to deliver the right of every girl, boy, woman and man to a free quality public education.
The Global Fund for Children	Provides capital to strengthen innovative community-based organizations serving the most vulnerable children and youth, complemented by a dynamic media programme that, through books, documentary photography, and film, highlights the issues affecting children.
Global Fund for Women	Makes grants to organizations around the world that provide access to both informal and formal education for women and girls, paying particular attention to the needs of girls and women in minority and marginalized communities.
Going to School	Creates magical media to inspire children to change their lives by going to school in India.
Mama Cash	The oldest international women's fund. Supports pioneering and innovative women's initiatives in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Commonwealth of Independent States, believing that social change starts with women and girls.
Massai Girls Education Fund	Created to improve the literacy, health and economic well being of Maasai women in Kenya and their families through education of girls and their communities.
Mercy Corps	Works to bring access to education to women and men of all ages and economic groups to help ensure a better future for all.
More Than Me	Works in one of the poorest slums in the world in Liberia, West Africa. Identifies girls who are at the highest risk of being sexually exploited to ensure that education and opportunity, not exploitation and poverty, defines their lives.
The Tara Project	Provides scholarships for secondary school and university in Kenya; researches hygiene solutions to increase girls regular attendance; partners with local schools to identify other ways to provide a safe, well-equipped learning space.
Vital Voices	Through its Rising Voices initiative for young women, Vital Voices is committed to equipping thousands more girls with the education, mentorship, and support to assert their potential as agents of change

(Source: Educating Girls Matters, <http://www.educatinggirlsmatters.org/howtohelp.html>)



Annex: 2

Check List of Problem Areas and Possible Interventions for Promoting Girls' Education

Problem Areas	Possible Interventions
<p>SOCIAL RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p><i>School Enrolment and Attendance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access to early childhood education • Insufficient attraction of schools for girls • Failure to enrol girls at school • Late enrolment • Low school attendance • Low rates of primary school completion • High dropout rates for girls • Withdrawal of girls (post-puberty) • Early marriage of girls • Lack of hope for secondary education and employment <p><i>Attitudes and Practices</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional and religious beliefs • Gender stereotypes • Internalised gender roles reproduced by child rearing and curriculum • Gender-differentiated child rearing • Education is seen as being irrelevant or in conflict with the accepted roles of women in society. • Early marriage and low status of women in society <p>ECONOMIC INTERVENTIONS</p> <p><i>Direct Costs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School books and supplies • School uniform • Food and transportation • Family preference to boys' education <p><i>Indirect Costs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child labour • Opportunity costs • Loss of income to family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy for ECE • Upgrading of schools as child-friendly learning environments • Campaigns stressing the correlation between education and national and family welfare • Incentives (scholarships, food and nutrition packs, etc.) • Provision of basic health services • Incentives based on merit targeted at girls that increase according to retention at school. • Campaign for marriage registration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media programmes and motivational materials • Introduction of national girls' enrolment days • Gender-sensitivity training for parents and local leaders • Better parenting programmes • Promote community and parental involvement in girls' education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentive programmes offering: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Small scholarships b. Free meals and nutrition packs c. Free school supplies d. Free or subsidised school uniform • Anti-child labour campaigns • Flexible school timetables • Parent awareness programme • Promotion of free or subsidised community child care facilities for families with girl students and younger brothers or sisters • Free meals or nutrition packs



GIRL-FRIENDLY EDUCATION

Curriculum Development

- Content of the curriculum
- Inappropriate gender-biased content
- Inadequate learning materials
- Learners are not provided with relevant functional literacy, numeracy and life skills compatible with their age and level of development
- Reinforcement of discrimination and gender stereotypes

EDUCATION PROCESS

Planning, Training and Evaluation

- Insufficient pre-service and in-service teacher training
- Vaguely defined learner outcomes and assessment tools
- Out-dated teaching methodologies and technologies
- Inflexible school calendars and timetables
- Insufficient application of systematic assessment and follow up
- Need for continuous professional development
- Learners fail to develop to their full potential
- Fewer female teachers
- Lack of gender-sensitivity or active discrimination in teaching and learning process
- Gender inequality in outcomes

Laws and Policies

There is insufficient enforcement of existing laws and policies relating to:

- Corporal punishment
- Child labour
- Donations imposed on families

- Gender review of quality education
- Gender-sensitive curriculum reform through:
 - a. Cleansing and production of gender-sensitive materials that do not reinforce stereotypes
 - b. Gender-sensitive education and training of authors and producers of learning materials
 - c. Campaigns for equitable distribution of supplies

- Provision of quality teacher-training programmes
- Incentives to use female teachers as role models
- Gender sensitive workshops focusing on eliminating disparity and dealing with discrimination
- Promotion of participatory approaches to learning
- Appropriate curriculum commensurate with needs targeted to vocational and/or professional training in order to secure marketable employment in the future
- Partnerships with NGOs and academia for the provision of information and communication technologies software and training especially for girls.

- Strengthening the school-parent partnership
- Training for teachers administrators and local officials on their legal obligations and children's rights
- Workshops and information networks to inform parents of their rights and legal support groups for family empowerment against imposed donations
- Budgetary allocations of schools should be increased sufficiently to meet need.



<p>Education Budget</p> <p>The national budgetary allocations for primary education is insufficient:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insufficient number• Insufficient number of schools• Schools are difficult to reach• Inadequate physical environment and comfort level of schools• Current expenditures cannot be fully met by schools from annual budgetary allowances which sometimes leads to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Overcrowded classrooms;b. Poor upkeep of premises;c. Parents' reluctance to send their daughters to school when they have to make donations. <p>CRISIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural disasters: floods, earthquakes, etc.• Man-made disasters, terrorism, war in neighbouring countries, leading to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Economic crisesb. Rural-urban migration• Increased need for labour contribution of girls• Increased non-enrolment and dropout rates for girls. <p>GENDER-BASED DATA REGARDING EDUCATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of disaggregated data by sex and ruralurban categories and other socio-economic characteristics of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Campaigns for wide-scale acceptance of the need for a higher percentage allocated to education from the national budget• Organisations of partnerships for additional financing and meeting of needs of the schools• Legal arrangements to promote voluntary donations such as income tax exemption. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision of psychosocial assistance to increase coping capacity• Promotion of partnerships in order to meet the needs of girl students• Flexible school hours• Assistance during out of school hours. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opinion surveys to identify gender-based data needs• Mechanisms for accuracy appraisals and assessments of gender-based statistics such as cross checking, random sampling, etc.• Electronic storage and retrieval of gender-based statistics.
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In India, DFID supports the government of India's Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) education programme and has committed £210 million to the plan.

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For further details, refer to Dr. Heidi Ross <http://www.indiana.edu/~harweb/research/springbud.html>

A bursary is a monetary award made by an institution to students who cannot afford to pay full fees. In return for the bursary the individual is usually obligated to be employed at the institution for the duration as the bursary ends.