

Factsheet

KS4 – Education and Girls



Girls' education was one of the main targets of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000. In the past 15 years, billions of pounds have been invested in providing education opportunities for girls, and huge improvements have been made. But much more has to be done.

It is predicated that by the end of 2015, 38% of countries will have achieved equality in education between boys and girls. This means that most countries (and girls) are living without equal rights to education. At the United Nations General Assembly in August and September 2015, world leaders must renew efforts to get ALL children into school, including girls.

Facts

- Of the 781 million illiterate people in the world, two thirds are female. In the world's poorest ten countries, nine out of ten of the poorest young women have not completed school.
- In the developing world, 31 million girls are still not enrolled in school.
- Three countries have over a million girls out of school: In Nigeria there are almost five and a half million, Pakistan, over three million, and in Ethiopia, over one million girls are out of school.

What are some of the challenges for girls?

The barriers to girls getting an education is more than a lack of funds – cultural bias, tradition and security concerns can all get in the way. Even when girls go to school, they are often treated differently from boys and discouraged from taking leadership roles. Lower expectations from families and school communities hinder their performance and achievement.



Educate a girl and you educate a community

Meet Jemimah Bulus and her daughter Jessica. They live in Manchok, central Nigeria. Jemimah is helping her daughter to read and write. This is something she couldn't do herself not too long ago. Jemimah dropped out of school when she got pregnant, but her friend Abigail persuaded her to return.



Jemimah says: “Abigail encouraged me as a friend. She said I have to come and say hello to school. They have been teaching me a lot about how to be educated, how to know more about school, how to read and how to have our own independence as a student as well. This was how I picked (built) my courage through her”.

Mothers' education improves children's nutrition. A child whose mother can read is 50% more likely to live past the age of five. Education is vital to eliminate malnutrition in the long term. Malnutrition is the underlying cause of more than a third of global child deaths. Studies have shown that educating women will lead to a developing country having economic growth, improved agriculture and healthier people.

Photo: Jon Hughes/ActionAid



Flexible schools

Flexible schools are especially useful for girls who are often expected to help at home instead of going to school.

Eight-year-old Nasra Hassan from Somaliland goes to literacy classes for a few hours in the middle of the day. This means her family are not put in a position of having to choose between education and earning enough money to survive.



Photo: Africa Educational Trust

Safety

[While some girls drop out of school because of harassment and violence, many girls do not get the chance of an education because the journey to school is not safe. In Nigeria, for example, almost five and a half million girls do not go to school.](#)

[Meet eleven-year-old Sefiyat from central Nigeria. Sefiyat's father does not want her to go to school until a bridge is built across the river separating their village from school. Until it is safe for Sefiyat to go to school she will continue working at home. Here she is, planting sweetcorn.](#)



Photo: ActionAid

What can you do to make school a safer place for ALL children?



Lower expectations

Education empowers women to overcome discrimination. Girls and young women who are educated have greater awareness of their rights, and greater confidence and freedom to make decisions that affect their lives, improve their own and their children's health and chances of survival, and boost their work prospects



Meet thirteen-year-old Kona Akter from Bangladesh. She is expected to support her family, but also goes to school for 4 to 5 days at the end of the month. She borrows notes from her friends and studies early mornings and late evenings. Kona wants to be the first teacher in her family.

Photo: Emdadul Islam Bitu/ActionAid

58 million children are missing out on school – 2015 could change their future. Remind world leaders that they promised ALL children an education by 2015. Speak up for the right to education for every child.

www.sendmyfriend.org

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