

WORLD BANK WORKING PAPER NO. 140

AFRICA HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SERIES

# Gender Equity in Junior and Senior Secondary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa



THE WORLD BANK

# Gender Equity in Junior and Senior Secondary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa

*Esi Sutherland-Addy*

Africa Region Human Development Department



**THE WORLD BANK**  
Washington, D.C.



THE WORLD BANK

Copyright © 2008  
The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank  
1818 H Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20433, U.S.A.  
All rights reserved  
Manufactured in the United States of America  
First Printing: March 2008



printed on recycled paper

1 2 3 4 5 11 10 09 08

World Bank Working Papers are published to communicate the results of the Bank's work to the development community with the least possible delay. The manuscript of this paper therefore has not been prepared in accordance with the procedures appropriate to formally-edited texts. Some sources cited in this paper may be informal documents that are not readily available.

The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank and its affiliated organizations, or those of the Executive Directors of The World Bank or the governments they represent.

The World Bank does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this work. The boundaries, colors, denominations, and other information shown on any map in this work do not imply any judgment on the part of The World Bank of the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

The material in this publication is copyrighted. Copying and/or transmitting portions or all of this work without permission may be a violation of applicable law. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank encourages dissemination of its work and will normally grant permission promptly to reproduce portions of the work.

For permission to photocopy or reprint any part of this work, please send a request with complete information to the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, USA, Tel: 978-750-8400, Fax: 978-750-4470, [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com).

All other queries on rights and licenses, including subsidiary rights, should be addressed to the Office of the Publisher, The World Bank, 1818 H Street NW, Washington, DC 20433, USA, Fax: 202-522-2422, email: [pubrights@worldbank.org](mailto:pubrights@worldbank.org).

ISBN-13: 978-0-8213-7505-1

eISBN: 978-0-8213-7506-8

ISSN: 1726-5878

DOI: 10.1596/978-0-8213-7505-1

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data has been requested.**



THE WORLD BANK

# Contents

|   |      |
|---|------|
| Foreword.....   | vii  |
| Acknowledgments .....   | ix   |
| Abbreviations and Acronyms .....  | xi   |
| Executive Summary.....  | xiii |
| Résumé Analytique .....   | xix  |
| <b>Introduction</b> .....   | 1    |
| Objectives of the Study .....   | 1    |
| Scope and Content.....  | 1    |
| Constraints of the Study .....  | 2    |
| The Global and Regional Context .....   | 2    |
| The Essence of Adolescence .....  | 4    |
| <b>1. Participation in Secondary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa:</b>               |      |
| <b>The Global Picture</b> .....   | 7    |
| EFA and Secondary Education .....   | 7    |
| Definition of Terms .....   | 8    |
| Gender Equity and Education .....   | 8    |
| Secondary Education in SSA.....   | 9    |
| Primary Completion and the Transition to Lower Secondary Education .....            | 10   |
| Gender Disparity in Secondary Education: A Widening Gap .....                       | 11   |
| <b>2. Factors Affecting the Participation of Girls in Secondary Education</b> ..... | 21   |
| Economic Policies, Growth, and Development.....                                     | 21   |
| Equity, Financial Measures, and Good Governance .....                               | 23   |
| Making Girls' Schooling Affordable: The Impact of Fees.....                         | 25   |
| The Bottleneck Effect .....   | 26   |
| The School Environment .....  | 27   |
| Sociocultural Barriers .....  | 31   |
| Violence against Girls .....  | 35   |
| The Unreached.....  | 36   |
| Summary of Factors .....  | 36   |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>3. Promotion of Female Participation in Secondary Education</b> . . . . .               | <b>37</b> |
| Two Policy Challenges . . . . .  | 37        |
| State Policy and the Promotion of Female Participation in<br>Secondary Education . . . . . | 40        |
| <b>4. Institutions Addressing the Issue of Secondary Education</b> . . . . .               | <b>47</b> |
| CAMFED . . . . .   | 47        |
| The Role of Civil Society: The FAWE Approach . . . . .                                     | 49        |
| FAWE Centres of Excellence: Making the Case for the Holistic Approach . . . . .            | 50        |
| Challenges of the COE Concept . . . . .  | 54        |
| <b>5. Concluding Observations</b> . . . . .  | <b>57</b> |
| Quality Factor . . . . .   | 57        |
| Importance of Intersectoral Approaches . . . . .   | 57        |
| Involvement of Students . . . . .  | 58        |
| Expanding Opportunities . . . . .  | 58        |
| Taking Best Practices to Scale . . . . .   | 59        |
| <b>References</b> . . . . .  | <b>61</b> |

## LIST OF TABLES

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. GER at Junior Secondary School Level in Senegal, 2000 . . . . .  | 11 |
| 2. Trends in Basic or Proxy Indicators to Measure EFA Goals 4 and 5 . . . . .                                     | 12 |
| 3. Share of Children 15–19 Who Have Completed Primary School,<br>by Gender (percent) . . . . .                    | 18 |
| 4. General Performance in Mathematics in Tanzania, 2000 . . . . .   | 28 |
| 5. Subject Enrollment for the Malawi Secondary School Leaving<br>Examination, by Gender . . . . .                 | 28 |
| 6. Reasons for the Low Participation of Girls in Science, Maths, and Technological<br>Subjects in Ghana . . . . . | 29 |
| 7. National Open Apprenticeship Scheme, Edo State, Nigeria . . . . .  | 30 |
| 8. Manazini Industrial Training Center Enrollment, 1990/91, Swaziland . . . . .                                   | 30 |
| 9. Final Baccalauréate (Senior High School) Results in TVE in<br>Burkina Faso (1992) . . . . .                    | 32 |
| 10. Details of Performance by Subject Area—High School Results in TVE in<br>Burkina Faso (1992) . . . . .         | 33 |
| 11. Factors Affecting Disparities in Secondary Education . . . . .  | 35 |
| 12. A Summary of Obstacles and Possible Strategies for Overcoming Them . . . . .                                  | 38 |

13. A National Vision for Girls’ Education in Ghana: Gender Targets Set by the Girls’ Education Unit, 2001 ..... 40

14. Female Participation Rates at Various Level of Education: 1998/90–2000/01 ..... 42

15. MOE/GEU Interventions in Girls’ Education ..... 43

16. Gender Activities by Development Partners. .... 44

17. FAWE Pilot Centres of Excellence at a Glance ..... 53

18. Costs of the Centres of Excellence. .... 55

**LIST OF BOXES**

1. Summary of Factors Affecting Disparities in Secondary Education ..... xv

2. EFA and MDG Goals Related to Secondary Education for Girls ..... 3



# Foreword

---

Many African countries are undertaking important economic reforms, improving macroeconomic management, liberalizing markets and trade, and widening the space for private sector activity. Where such reforms have been sustained they have raised growth and incomes, and reduced poverty. However, Africa still faces serious development challenges where education, health, and social development are concerned. The World Bank has acknowledged and incorporated this understanding within its Africa Action Plan (AAP) by underscoring the fundamental importance of expanding not only primary but also secondary and higher education, and linking it to a range of employment options for the African youth.

United Nations and World Bank progress reports on achieving the Millennium Development Goals attest to a renewed commitment in Africa to defeat poverty and disease. The Education for All-Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) involves more than 30 bilateral and international agencies and has gradually made important strides. In the coming years, the key challenges are to continue the efforts toward achieving universal primary education, to expand secondary school access in response to demands from growing African economies, and to improve quality, relevance, and equity of learning across the board.

Education plays an important role in promoting economic growth and social progress. Secondary education and training, in particular, is one of the key factors for increased economic growth and social development. Its graduates enter labor markets that increasingly demand “modern knowledge and skills, readiness to take initiatives, and ability to solve problems.” Asia and Latin America have shown these trends convincingly. Secondary education is also indispensable for young people to become productive citizens and to lead healthy lives. Expanding access while simultaneously improving quality in post-primary education will force African countries to make education service delivery more efficient and to apply “innovative best practices,” such as forging public-private partnerships, and exploring alternative structures and modes of delivery.

The Africa Region’s Human Development strategy is anchored in its Africa Action Plan. The study of Secondary Education and Training in Africa (SEIA) is an initiative of the Africa Human Development Department (AFTHD) and is led by Jacob Bregman (Lead Education Specialist). The SEIA program aims to assist countries to develop sustainable strategies for expansion and quality improvements in secondary education and training. In cooperation with education teams from African countries and international institutions the SEIA program produced eight thematic studies (during 2003–06) and a final Synthesis Report in 2007. The SEIA program study results were discussed at three regional SEIA conferences (Uganda in 2003, Senegal in 2005, and Ghana in 2007), in which over 35 countries participated. All SEIA products are available on its website: [www.worldbank.org/afr/seia](http://www.worldbank.org/afr/seia).

This thematic study is about gender equity in junior and senior secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa. It consists of case studies of Ghana, Malawi and Uganda, as well as, a review of studies undertaken over the past ten years on education in Africa with particular attention to girls’ and secondary education. Gender equity at the primary level has been the focus of considerable attention within the Education for All Framework of Action, but much less so at the secondary level. Evidence of gender inequity and inequality in terms of access, retention and performance in secondary education in SSA raises many questions.

While transition rates from primary to secondary are higher for girls than boys, and the repetition rates are lower, girls still significantly trail behind boys in terms of secondary GER. The purpose of this study is to document and analyze the extent and nature of gender disadvantage in junior and senior secondary education, to analyze the causes of this disadvantage and to identify strategies that may be effective in reducing or eliminating it. I hope that this thematic study will make a timely and useful contribution to the debate on SEIA issues.

**Jacob Bregman**

*Lead Education Specialist and SEIA Task Team Leader*

*Africa Region Human Development*

*The World Bank*



# Acknowledgments

---

This SEIA Thematic Study is about gender equity in junior and senior secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa and is based on the work of many. This paper was commissioned as part of the eight SEIA Thematic Studies by the Human Development Department of the Africa Region (AFTHD) of the World Bank. This report was proposed by the participating country team representatives during the 2nd SEIA Regional Conference, held in Dakar, Senegal in June 2005. The work was contracted out to the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) <http://www.fawe.org/home/index.asp>.

The author wishes to acknowledge the immense and invaluable work done by Amina Osman particularly in researching current information which has contributed to the breadth and pertinence of our analysis. She also participated in the writing of significant portions of this report for which I am very grateful.

The author also wishes to also thank most sincerely Leslie Casely-Hayford and Jerome Djangmah for readily sharing documentation and insights on the topic under review and in particular, their own work on the Ghana situation.

The author is also grateful to Marema Dioum, Program Officer at FAWE Headquarters, for facilitating this project. My gratitude also goes to the documentalist in charge of the FAWE Documentation Centre and Lucy Wairi both of the FAWE Headquarters in Nairobi for their kind and efficient support as well as Ekow Arthur-Entsua of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.

The various drafts of this thematic study were discussed with the SEIA team of the Africa region in the World Bank. Preliminary conclusions, the methodology, and the overall objectives of this thematic Gender study on Secondary Education were presented at the 3rd SEIA regional conference in Accra, Ghana, in April 2007. Comments from Sub-Saharan country representatives were incorporated in the final version of the report.

Adriaan Verspoor (Senior Education Consultant, Africa Region, World Bank) and Jacob Bregman (SEIA Task Team Leader and Lead Education Specialist, Africa Region, World Bank) provided extensive feedback and comments on earlier drafts as the study progressed. This report can also be found on the SEIA website at [www.worldbank.org/afr/seia](http://www.worldbank.org/afr/seia).





# Abbreviations and Acronyms

---

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| CAMFED | Cambridge Foundation for Education and Development    |
| CBOs   | Community Based Organisations                         |
| CHER   | Coalition for Health Rights                           |
| CRS    | Catholic Relief Services                              |
| DFID   | Department for International Development              |
| EDDI   | Education for Development and Democracy Initiative    |
| EFA    | Education For All                                     |
| ESSP   | Education Sector Support Programme                    |
| FAWE   | Foundation for African Women Educationalists          |
| GES    | Ghana Education Service                               |
| GEU    | Girls' Education Unit                                 |
| GPI    | Gender Parity Index                                   |
| GPRS   | Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy                      |
| GLSS   | Ghana Living Standard Survey                          |
| GSS    | Ghana Statistical Service                             |
| IEC    | Information, Education and Communication              |
| JSS    | Junior Secondary School                               |
| MDGs   | Millennium Development Goals                          |
| MOE    | Ministry of Education                                 |
| PPMED  | Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Department |
| SSA    | Sub-Saharan Africa                                    |
| SSS    | Senior Secondary School                               |
| TVE    | Technical Vocational Education                        |
| UCC    | University of Cape Coast                              |
| UCEW   | University College of Education Winneba               |
| UIS    | UNESCO Institute for Statistics                       |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children Fund                          |
| UNESCO | United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization   |
| WUSC   | World University Service of Canada                    |





# Executive Summary

---

## Objectives of the Study

This thematic study has been undertaken as part of the World Bank Africa Region Human Development Department study “Secondary Education In Africa (SEIA),” which aims to collect, analyze and summarize current best practices and identify sustainable strategies for expansion and improved quality, equity and efficiency of delivery of secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

In our examination of gender equity in junior and senior secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa we are mandated to:

- Document and analyze the extent and nature of gender disadvantage in junior and senior secondary education;
- Analyze the causes of the disadvantage; and
- Identify strategies that may be effective in reducing or eliminating it.

## Approach

The study consists almost entirely of a review of studies undertaken on education in Africa, paying particular attention to girls’ and secondary education over the past 10 years.

In the study, we initially seek to provide a global and regional context in which to address the above objectives. This is followed by an overview of secondary education on the continent. Using data over the last 10 years, trends reflecting enrollment rates for girls and boys in primary/lower secondary/upper secondary education are provided as well as gender-specific trends between different geographical and socio-economic groups. Special attention has been paid to transition from primary to lower secondary and lower secondary to upper secondary and to performance by girls in particular at this level of education. The above analysis clearly shows gender disparities in participation in secondary education. Specific obstacles to girls’ participation in secondary education are delineated and examined.

There is evidence in the literature of a range of interventions being undertaken at the policymaking, community, and school levels by a number of actors in response to challenges encountered with regard to improving participation at the secondary level in Africa and, in particular, bridging the gender gap. Policy interventions are presented using Ghana, Malawi, and Uganda as case studies. The work of a number of institutions involved in education for adolescent girls in general and secondary education in particular is presented. These include CAMFED, UNICEF, UNESCO, and USAID. We present in detail the Centres of Excellence Programme of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) as the context for discussing the factors involved in a holistic approach to gender equity in secondary education provision.

## Main Findings

Secondary school is often portrayed as a contiguous phase of post-primary education when it is in fact a fragmented sub-sector serving different purposes in different countries. In 22 African countries, there is compulsory lower secondary schooling forming a part of basic education together with primary education whereas in the rest of the countries, lower and upper secondary form a contiguous whole. Disadvantages for girls are more common in Africa and in parts of Asia. Of the 53 countries with a Gender Parity Index (GPI) below 0.97, 31 are in Africa, 17 in Asia and just 5 in the rest of the world.

Africa has the lowest level of lower secondary participation (45 percent) compared to other regions (West Asia 69 percent; Europe, South America 100 percent; East Asia and Oceania greater than 90 percent). The gross enrollment rate (GER) for upper secondary is also lowest in Africa (29 percent) as compared to other regions (Europe greater than 100 percent; Asia 50 percent with West Asia at 40 percent and East Asia at 48 percent).

Gender disparities against girls are highest in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, and Togo, with fewer than 60 girls per 100 boys entering secondary education.

Factors affecting participation of girls in secondary include policy and direction of aid flows at the international level, economic policies at the national level, family level economic decisions, and sociocultural norms.

The impact of dominant economic regimes such as structural adjustment has been noted for its effect on girl's education. School fees for instance as part of a cost-sharing regime have been observed to lead to dropouts with families opting to forego the education of the girl where there are severe financial constraints. Documentation of trends demonstrates certain important correlations between expenditure in education, economic growth and gender, namely that where there is a higher level of expenditure, there is also greater gender equity. Also the children of the poor, particularly girls have a lower completion rate, are less likely to have a passing grade at secondary level and more likely to dropout due to lack of school fees.

Secondary education has been over-shadowed for more than two decades as primary education has been supported and promoted as a basic human right and as a cost efficient investment for development. Paradoxically, however, looking forward, in countries where universal primary completion is still to be achieved, increasing numbers of children completing primary school will result in pressure for more places at the secondary level.

The most direct and fast-acting way for governments to boost school enrollment is to reduce the direct, indirect, and opportunity costs to parents of education their daughters (according to Herz and Sperling 2005). This may be achieved by cutting school fees or, providing incentives and scholarships to help cover direct, indirect and opportunity costs.

Whatever is done to mobilize internal resources at the country level, better quality, as well as more aid, is urgently needed to achieve free primary and secondary education.

## Concluding Observations

### *Quality Factor*

In contrast to the current situation in most other regions, investment in education in Sub-Saharan Africa continues to focus largely on expanding enrollments rather than on higher per student spending, and the pupil-teacher ratio, which had been declining, is now up to

**Box 1: Summary of Factors Affecting Disparities in Secondary Education****Demand Side**

- Social and cultural factors which:
  - affect the behavior and the choices of parents and pupils
  - girls' education seen as incompatible with religious and/or traditional values
  - boys' education favored over girls' education
- Economic factors such as:
  - Poverty
  - Direct and Indirect Costs (school fees, uniforms, textbooks, transport, etc.)
  - Opportunity Costs v/s lower rate of return (girls are needed for household or labor tasks)
- Familial factors such as:
  - Parents' low level of literacy and education hence low perception of the importance of girls' education
  - Early marriages and pregnancies
  - Orphans
  - Girl headed households
- Other factors:
  - HIV and Aids

**Supply Side**

- Political Factors such as:
  - policy priorities which focus on primary basis education and put emphasis on access and enrollment v/s retention and completion
  - Budget constraints and macroeconomic programs with negative impact on the education sector and lack of incentives for girls' access to primary and secondary education
  - Political instability
  - Inconsistent educational policies
- Bureaucratic factors: formal commitments to gender objectives become weaker as they travel down the bureaucratic chain
- Institutional factors:
  - school may not be gender sensitive with lack of gender awareness among teachers
  - lack of female teachers
  - safety issues (long distances to school; gender-based violence including sexual violence and corporal punishment)
- Infrastructural factors:
  - long distances to schools
  - remote areas with no schools
  - lack of sex-segregated sanitary facilities
- Contextual factors:
  - poor quality of education programs
  - non contextualized education systems to local gender specific learning needs

40 pupils per teacher (UNESCO 2002b). Input indicators and system process indicators such as grade repetition and dropout are useful proxies for a vital element of educational quality, namely learning outcomes.

Research in Kenya and Ghana showed that girls are more likely than boys to drop out of school because of negative attitudes and discrimination (Mensch and Lloyd 1998; Lloyd, Mensch, and Clark 1998; Sutherland-Addy and others 1995). Unlike boys, their achievement is also poorer when teachers think they are naturally less capable, which is also the case when parents themselves hold their daughters' abilities in lower estimation. In such cases, girls perform worse on exams than do girls whose parents do not share the same view (Appleton 1995).

A quality education, one which promotes equality in the learning environment and equality of opportunity, should be the direction for policy, program and project goals. A quality education would address the issues that pose barriers to girls' access, participation and achievement, and the risks that threaten adolescent girls' well-being and life opportunities.

### *Importance of Intersectoral Approaches*

Some strategies are better than others in creating quality education and achieving gender equality. In this respect, multiple strategies and intersectoral approaches are the most effective. Intersectoral approaches are necessary to address the barriers affecting and needs of adolescent girls. HIV/AIDS, poverty and work, early pregnancy and marriage, sexual abuse and trafficking all must be confronted, while skill development, including an emphasis on science and technology, is important to prepare adolescent girls to engage in meaningful work, along with empowerment and leadership opportunities to participate in social and civil society. Intersectoral strategies require partnerships among government social sectors, international organizations, NGOs, business, religious organizations and leaders, communities, and adolescents to mobilize support which will provide educational opportunities and to make broader macro-level change.

### *Involvement of Students*

Recent innovations that utilize a gender approach involving adolescent girls and boys are showing promise in addressing barriers facing girls' participation in education. Adolescent girls and boys can have an influence on supporting girls to attend school, preventing them from dropping out, and helping them achieve. Adolescent girls and boys also need to learn how to relate to each other in healthy ways. More attention needs to be given to the development of innovative projects that have an impact on changing girls and boys' behavior and that advance equality in the learning experience and equality of opportunity.

While there is considerable literature outlining policy directions for post-primary education and alternative options for adolescent girls, there is a lack of research that includes evidence and comprehensive data on girls' participation in alternative approaches to education. Data collection and development of additional indicators to assess the participation of girls in nonformal and alternative educational options are necessary for better policy and programmatic planning and evaluation. Rigorous studies on the impacts of strategies used in, and the cost-effectiveness and comparative advantage of, alternative education programs are necessary to determine their effectiveness in achieving their goals, and subsequently, in improving adolescent girls' lives and affecting societal change.

### *Expanding Opportunities*

In Africa, enrollments have grown substantially. Since 1990, primary enrollment grew by 42 million and secondary enrollment by 18 million. Between 1998 and 2002, growth was substantially faster than in previous periods. Indeed, at the primary level, Africa had the highest growth rate among all regions. Since 1995, population growth has slowed while enrollments have increased. Between 1998 and 2002, enrollments grew by 5 percent annually with a corresponding growth of less than 2 percent in the school age population, resulting in a considerable increase in primary gross enrollment ratios from 81 to 91 percent. The number of secondary students also grew substantially, about 5 percent annually, with a higher rate of increase in between 1998 and 2002. Since 1998, this resulted in an increase in the secondary gross enrollment ratio of 4 percentage points, from 33 to 37 percent.

Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, Mozambique, and Niger achieved large gains in primary enrollment (40 percent growth or higher) between 1998 and 2002. In all these countries,

except Niger, secondary enrollment grew at an even faster pace. Growth at the secondary level has also been substantial relative to that in primary, but this is partly due to starting from a lower baseline. However, managing growth is a question of resources, and secondary education typically demands more resources per pupil than primary education.

The barriers to girls' access to secondary education are complex, diverse, and interrelated. As Kane (2004) argues and various interventions such as the FAWC Centres of Excellence (COEs) confirm, a multiple-process driven strategy that works to improve girls' education outcomes is one that attempts to tackle all the main factors constraining girls' participation in school. Gender-specific interventions on their own will not necessarily lead to better educational outcomes for girls; there is need for system wide interventions as well. Educational paths are crucially constructed by factors related to sociocultural background, images of self, personal abilities, and educational opportunities. Therefore, in addition to looking at the education and training system in itself, the wider non-educational environment outside the education system should be taken into consideration. Socially constructed space including schools, institutions and social relations at various levels may be defined as an enabling environment. Given the particular vulnerabilities and strengths of the adolescent girls, they must crucially be committed to their own empowerment and must be positively partnered by the males who play a role in their lives.

### *Taking Best Practices to Scale*

An examination of the question of gender equity in junior and senior secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa reveals that secondary education has fallen through the cracks and requires a more nuanced data base to provide up-to-date information for policy formulation and the monitoring and evaluation of interventions currently being conducted. This is currently not readily available. Finally, in spite of the complexities, some interventions are working and appear sustainable. Information on these models should be widely disseminated and they should be taken to scale where suitable.



# Résumé Analytique

## Objectifs de l'étude

La présente étude thématique a été entreprise par le Département développement humain Région Afrique de la Banque mondiale dans le cadre de l'étude intitulée « L'enseignement secondaire en Afrique (*Secondary Education In Africa*, SEIA) », dont le but est de recueillir, analyser et synthétiser les pratiques modèles actuelles ainsi que d'identifier des stratégies durables d'expansion et d'amélioration de la qualité, de l'équité et de l'efficacité de l'enseignement secondaire en Afrique subsaharienne.

Pour examiner l'égalité des genres dans les premier et deuxième cycles de l'enseignement secondaire en Afrique subsaharienne, nous avons été chargés de:

- Documenter et analyser l'étendue et la nature des désavantages liés au genre les premier et deuxième cycles de l'enseignement secondaire;
- Analyser les causes de ces désavantages;
- Identifier des stratégies pouvant s'avérer efficaces pour les réduire ou les éliminer.

## Approche

Nous avons principalement passé en revue les études portant sur l'enseignement en Afrique, en prêtant une attention particulière à l'éducation des filles et à l'enseignement secondaire au cours des dix dernières années. Nous commencerons par décrire le contexte global et régional dans lequel s'inscrivent les objectifs ci-dessus. Viendra ensuite un aperçu de l'enseignement secondaire sur le continent. En utilisant les données des dix dernières années, nous présenterons les tendances reflétant le taux de scolarisation des filles et garçons à l'école primaire et dans les deux cycles de l'enseignement secondaire ainsi que les tendances spécifiques au genre dans différents groupes géographiques et socioéconomiques.

Une attention particulière sera portée d'une part, à la transition du primaire vers le premier cycle secondaire ainsi que de celui-ci vers le deuxième cycle, et d'autre part, à la performance des filles à ce niveau d'enseignement. Cette dernière analyse montre clairement des disparités liées au genre au niveau de la participation à l'enseignement secondaire. Les obstacles spécifiques à la participation des filles à l'enseignement secondaire seront précisés et examinés.

La littérature témoigne de la mise en œuvre de toute une gamme d'interventions par un certain nombre d'acteurs aux niveaux de la décision politique, des communautés et des établissements scolaires en réponse aux défis opposés en Afrique à l'effort d'amélioration de la participation au secondaire, et en particulier à la réduction des écarts liés au genre. Ces interventions sont illustrées par les cas du Ghana, du Malawi et de l'Ouganda. Est présenté également le travail d'un certain nombre d'institutions impliquées dans l'éducation des adolescentes en général et dans l'enseignement secondaire en particulier. Parmi ces institutions, on trouve la CAMFED, l'UNICEF, l'UNESCO et l'USAID. Nous présenterons en détail le Programme des centres d'excellence du Forum des éducatrices africaines

(FAWE) en tant que contexte de discussion des facteurs impliqués dans une approche holistique de l'égalité des genres au niveau de l'enseignement secondaire.

## Principaux résultats

L'enseignement secondaire est souvent décrit comme une phase de l'enseignement post-primaire alors qu'il s'agit en fait d'un sous-secteur fragmenté servant différents objectifs dans différents pays. Dans 22 pays d'Afrique, le premier cycle secondaire est obligatoire et fait partie de l'éducation de base, au même titre que l'enseignement primaire. Dans les autres pays, les cycles primaire et secondaire forment un tout continu. Les désavantages subis par les filles sont plus fréquents en Afrique et dans certaines régions d'Asie. Parmi les 53 pays dont l'indice de parité hommes-femmes (GPI) est inférieur à 0,97, 31 sont des pays africains, 17 asiatiques et seulement 5 appartiennent au reste du monde.

Le niveau de participation au premier cycle secondaire (45%) de l'Afrique est le plus bas parmi les différentes régions (Asie de l'Est: 69%; Europe, Amérique du Sud: 100%; Asie de l'Est et Océanie > 90%). Le taux brut de scolarisation (TBS) dans le deuxième cycle du secondaire est également le plus bas en Afrique (29%) comparé aux autres régions (Europe > 100%; Asie: 50% avec l'Asie de l'Ouest à 40% et l'Asie de l'Est à 48%).

Les disparités liées au genre défavorisant les filles sont plus élevées au Bénin, en Côte d'Ivoire, en Ethiopie, en Guinée, au Mali et au Togo, avec moins de 60 filles pour 100 garçons à l'entrée de l'enseignement secondaire.

Les facteurs affectant la participation des filles au secondaire incluent les mesures politiques et l'orientation des flux de l'aide au niveau international, les politiques économiques au niveau national et les décisions économiques au niveau familial, ainsi que les normes socioculturelles.

Les mesures économiques dominantes, telles que les ajustements structurels, peuvent être relevées pour leur impact sur l'éducation des filles. On constate, par exemple, un décrochage scolaire des filles lorsque les frais scolaires doivent être partiellement pris en charge par les familles et que celles-ci font le choix de renoncer à l'éducation des filles quand les contraintes financières sont trop importantes. La documentation sur les tendances montre certaines corrélations importantes entre les dépenses d'éducation, la croissance économique et le genre, en particulier le fait que lorsque le niveau des dépenses est plus élevé, l'égalité entre les genres est également plus grande. De même, les enfants de familles pauvres, les filles en particulier, présentent un taux d'achèvement plus bas, sont moins susceptibles de passer au niveau secondaire et plus susceptibles d'abandonner en raison de manque d'argent pour les frais scolaires.

L'enseignement secondaire a été laissé de côté pendant plus de deux décennies, l'enseignement primaire ayant été soutenu et encouragé en tant que droit fondamental de l'homme et investissement efficace pour le développement. Dans les pays où l'enseignement primaire universel n'est pas encore entièrement une réalité, on constate aujourd'hui que le nombre croissant d'enfants terminant l'école primaire devrait très bientôt exercer une pression sur les places disponibles au niveau secondaire.

La manière la plus directe et la plus rapide qu'ont les gouvernements pour stimuler l'inscription des filles à l'école est de réduire les coûts directs, indirects et d'opportunité à la charge des parents (selon Herz et Sperling, 2005). Cela peut être réalisé en réduisant les coûts de scolarité ou en fournissant des incitants et des bourses d'études pour aider à couvrir les coûts directs, indirects et d'opportunité. Il est urgent de tout mettre en œuvre pour

**Encadre 1: Résumé des facteurs affectant les disparités dans l'enseignement secondaire****Côté demande**

- Des facteurs culturels et sociaux qui:
  - Affectent le comportement et les choix des parents et des élèves
  - Font considérer l'éducation des filles comme incompatible avec les valeurs religieuses et/ou traditionnelles
  - Privilégient l'éducation des garçons au détriment de celle des filles
- Des facteurs économiques tels que:
  - La pauvreté
  - Les coûts directs et indirects (frais de scolarité, uniformes, manuels, transports, etc.)
  - Les coûts d'opportunité par rapport à une rentabilité peu élevée (on a besoin des filles pour les tâches ménagères ou le travail)
- Des facteurs familiaux tels que:
  - Le niveau peu élevé d'alphabétisation et d'éducation des parents, réduisant l'importance accordée à l'éducation des filles)
  - Des mariages et des grossesses précoces
  - Les orphelins
  - Les filles chefs de ménages
- Autres facteurs:
  - VIH et Sida

**Côté offre**

- Des facteurs politiques tels que:
  - Des priorités politiques centrées sur l'enseignement primaire de base et mettant l'accent sur l'accès et l'inscription plutôt que sur la poursuite et l'aboutissement des études
  - Des contraintes budgétaires et des programmes macro-économiques ayant un impact négatif sur le secteur de l'éducation et un manque d'incitations à l'accès des filles à l'enseignement primaire et secondaire
  - L'instabilité politique
  - Les politiques éducatives incohérentes
- Des facteurs administratifs:
  - les engagements officiels en faveur de l'égalité des genres deviennent plus faibles à mesure qu'ils descendent la chaîne bureaucratique
- Des facteurs institutionnels:
  - L'école peut ne pas se montrer concernée par les questions d'égalité des genres, les professeurs y étant peu sensibilisés
  - Le manque de femmes professeurs
  - Des problèmes de sécurité (longs trajets jusqu'à l'école; violences à connotation sexuelles y compris des viols et des punitions corporelles)
- Des facteurs liés à l'infrastructure:
  - De longs trajets jusqu'à l'école
  - Des zones reculées dépourvues d'écoles
  - Le manque d'installations sanitaires non mixtes
- Des facteurs contextuels:
  - La qualité médiocre des programmes scolaires
  - Des systèmes d'éducation non adaptés au contexte local des besoins d'apprentissage spécifiques au genre

mobiliser les ressources internes des pays, apporter une meilleure qualité et davantage d'aides, afin de mettre définitivement en place un enseignement primaire et secondaire gratuits.

## Observations finales

### *Facteur de qualité*

Au contraire de ce qui se fait dans la plupart des autres régions, en Afrique subsaharienne, l'investissement dans le secteur de l'éducation continue à se concentrer largement sur l'augmentation des inscriptions plutôt que sur l'augmentation de la dépense par étudiant, et le

ratio élèves/enseignant, qui avait un temps diminué, s'élève maintenant à 40 élèves par professeur (UNESCO, 2002b). Les indicateurs d'entrée et ceux de progression, tels que les redoublements et les abandons, sont des variables de substitution importantes permettant de rendre compte de la qualité de l'enseignement, et notamment des résultats de l'apprentissage.

Des recherches menées au Kenya et au Ghana ont montré que les filles sont plus susceptibles que les garçons d'abandonner l'école à cause d'attitudes et de discrimination négatives (Mensch et Lloyd, 1998; Lloyd, Mensch et Clark, 1998; Sutherland-Addy et al 1995). Elles achèvent moins souvent leurs études lorsque leurs professeurs les considèrent comme naturellement moins capables que les garçons ou quand leurs parents eux-mêmes pensent la même chose. En pareils cas, ces filles réussissent moins bien aux examens que celles dont les parents ne partagent pas le même point de vue (Appleton, 1995).

Une éducation de qualité, qui met en avant l'égalité dans l'environnement éducatif ainsi que l'égalité des chances, devrait être le but recherché par les stratégies, programmes et projets mis en œuvre. Une éducation de qualité doit s'attaquer aux obstacles restreignant l'accès et la participation des filles à l'éducation et leur réussite, ainsi qu'aux risques qui menacent le bien-être et les opportunités de vie des adolescentes.

### *Importance des approches intersectorielle*

Certaines stratégies sont meilleures que d'autres pour la création d'une éducation de qualité et le respect de l'égalité des genres. À cet égard, les stratégies multiples et les approches intersectorielles sont les plus efficaces. Ces dernières sont nécessaires pour s'attaquer aux obstacles s'opposant aux besoins des adolescentes. Le VIH/Sida, la pauvreté et le travail, le mariage et la grossesse précoces, les abus sexuels et le commerce des êtres humains doivent tous être combattus, tandis que le développement de compétences, en particulier en science et technologie, est important pour préparer les adolescentes à s'engager dans un travail sérieux, à acquérir l'autonomie et à saisir les opportunités de pouvoir, qui leur permettront de participer à la vie sociale et à la société civile. Les stratégies intersectorielles exigent des partenariats entre les secteurs gouvernementaux liés au social, les organisations internationales, les ONG, les entreprises, les organisations et chefs religieux, les communautés et les adolescents pour mobiliser un appui qui fournira des opportunités éducatives et produira des changements au niveau macro.

### *Implication des étudiants*

Des innovations récentes qui ont adopté une approche liée au genre impliquant les adolescents et adolescentes se sont montrées prometteuses dans la lutte contre les obstacles à la participation des filles à l'éducation. Les jeunes des deux sexes peuvent avoir une influence en encourageant les filles à aller à l'école, en les empêchant d'abandonner, et en les aidant à réussir. Ils ont également besoin d'apprendre à s'adresser les uns aux autres de façon saine. Une plus grande attention doit être accordée au développement de projets innovants ayant un impact sur les changements de comportements des garçons et des filles et faisant progresser l'égalité dans l'apprentissage et l'égalité des chances.

Bien qu'il existe une littérature considérable définissant les directions que doivent suivre les mesures en faveur de l'éducation post-primaire, et les options alternatives pour les adolescentes, il n'y a pas de recherches incluant des faits et des données complètes sur la

participation des filles lorsque des approches alternatives sont suivies pour l'éducation. Il faudrait collecter des données et élaborer des indicateurs supplémentaires pour évaluer la participation des filles dans le cadre d'options éducatives non officielles et alternatives, et pouvoir mettre en œuvre des mesures, un programme et une évaluation plus adaptés. Des études rigoureuses de l'impact des stratégies utilisées, de la rentabilité et des avantages comparatifs des programmes éducatifs alternatifs doivent être réalisées pour déterminer leur efficacité à atteindre leurs buts, et par conséquent à améliorer la vie des adolescentes et à apporter des changements dans la société.

### *Opportunités d'expansion*

En Afrique, les inscriptions ont connu une hausse substantielle. Depuis 1990, elles ont augmenté de 42 millions dans le primaire et de 18 millions dans le secondaire. Entre 1998 et 2002, leur croissance a été nettement plus rapide qu'au cours des périodes précédentes. Au niveau du primaire, l'Afrique avait en effet le taux de croissance le plus élevé de toutes les régions. Depuis 1995, la croissance démographique s'est ralentie tandis que le taux d'inscriptions augmentait. Entre 1998 et 2002, les inscriptions ont augmenté de 5% par an, avec une hausse correspondante de moins de 2% de la population en âge d'école. Il en a résulté une augmentation importante des taux bruts de scolarisation dans le primaire, qui sont passés de 81% à 91%. Le nombre d'étudiants du secondaire a également augmenté de façon substantielle, d'environ 5% par an, avec un taux encore plus élevé entre 1998 et 2002. Depuis 1998, la conséquence en a été une hausse de 4 points pourcentage du taux de scolarisation dans le secondaire qui est passé de 33% à 37%.

L'Erythrée, l'Éthiopie, la Guinée, le Mali, le Mozambique et le Niger sont parvenus à des augmentations importantes du niveau des inscriptions au primaire (40% de croissance ou plus) entre 1998 et 2002. Dans tous ces pays, sauf au Niger, les inscriptions au secondaire ont augmenté de façon encore plus rapide. La croissance au niveau du secondaire a également été importante par rapport à celle du primaire, mais elle s'explique en partie par le fait qu'on partait d'un niveau plus bas. Gérer la croissance est une question de ressources, et l'enseignement secondaire exige par définition plus de ressources par élève que l'éducation primaire.

Les obstacles à l'accès des filles à l'enseignement secondaire sont complexes, divers et interconnectés. Comme le soutient Kane (2004) et le confirment différentes initiatives telles que les Centres d'excellence du FAWE, pour qu'une stratégie multiprocessus visant à améliorer les résultats de l'éducation des filles soit efficace, il faut qu'elle s'attaque à tous les principaux facteurs qui empêchent les filles d'aller à l'école. Les interventions spécifiquement dédiées au genre ne conduiront pas nécessairement à elles toutes seules à de meilleurs résultats au niveau de l'éducation des filles, il faut en plus de vastes interventions au niveau de tout le système. Les façons de procéder en matière d'éducation doivent impérativement être élaborées en fonction de facteurs liés au contexte socioculturel, à l'image de soi, aux compétences personnelles et aux opportunités éducatives. C'est pourquoi, en plus de s'intéresser au système d'enseignement et de la formation en tant que tel, il faut également prendre en compte l'environnement au sens large. Tout l'espace socialement construit, y compris l'école, les institutions et les relations sociales à différents niveaux, doit devenir favorable à l'éducation. Étant données leurs forces et leurs vulnérabilités, les adolescentes doivent impérativement être impliquées dans leur propre autonomisation et positivement soutenues par les hommes qui jouent un rôle dans leurs vies.

### *Utiliser les pratiques modèles à grande échelle*

Un examen de la question de l'égalité des genres dans les deux cycles de l'enseignement secondaire en Afrique subsaharienne révèle que l'enseignement secondaire est le parent pauvre et qu'il faudrait une base de données plus nuancée contenant des informations à jour capables pour pouvoir formuler des politiques et pour le suivi et évaluation des interventions actuellement en cours. Ces informations ne sont actuellement pas disponibles. Enfin, en dépit des complexités, certaines initiatives fonctionnent et semblent soutenables. Les informations sur ces modèles devraient être largement disséminées et portées à grande échelle là où cela est possible.

# Introduction

---

## Objectives of the Study

This thematic study has been undertaken as part of the World Bank Africa Region Human Development Department study “Secondary Education In Africa (SEIA),”<sup>1</sup> which aims to collect, analyze, and summarize current best practices, and to identify sustainable strategies for expansion and improved quality, equity, and efficiency of delivery of secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

In our examination of gender equity in junior and senior secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa we are mandated to:

- Document and analyze the extent and nature of gender disadvantage in junior and senior secondary education;
- Analyze the causes of the disadvantage; and
- Identify strategies that may be effective in reducing or eliminating it.

## Scope and Content

The study initially seeks to provide a global and regional context in which to address the above objectives. This is followed by an overview of secondary education on the continent. Using data over the last 10 years, trends reflecting enrollment rates for girls and boys in

---

1. The SEIA study Concept Paper (September 2002) is available upon request. It was approved by the Bank in June 2002, and has been disseminated widely to Sub-Saharan educators and our Clients. See: <http://www.worldbank.org/afr/seia/thematic.htm> for full description of SEIA.



primary/lower secondary/upper secondary education will be provided as well as gender specific trends between different geographical and socio-economic groups. Special attention will be paid to transition from primary to lower secondary and lower secondary to upper secondary and to performance by girls in particular at this level of education.

This analysis clearly shows gender disparities in participation in secondary education. Chapter two of the study will seek to delineate the specific challenges faced by girls when it comes to participation in secondary education.

There is evidence in the literature of a range of interventions being undertaken at policymaking, community and school level by a number of actors in response to challenges being encountered in increasing participation at the secondary level in particular and bridging the gender gap. A number of these will be presented in the form of case studies and discussed. Factors which are likely to make it possible to minimize the effects of the challenges will be raised. These include gender relevant policies, teaching and support to help girls at lower and upper secondary education deal with issues such as: HIV/Aids prevention, sexual harassment, and pregnancy.

## Constraints of the Study

Severe time constraints caused us to restrict the study to a desktop search and to engage in an analysis which did not benefit from a review by policymakers and technocrats responsible for secondary education in the region. Furthermore, given the paucity and atomized nature of information on secondary education in the sub-continent, the value of the study would have been greatly enhanced by current information and insights from organizations intervening directly in what is doubtlessly a complex situation. This lack of direct contact has particularly affected our coverage of the Francophone and Lusophone zones of the area under study.

Furthermore, data captured on the cohort, or the segment of society which would be assumed to be involved in secondary education, is actually quite difficult to acquire, because this cohort is characterized by its absence from formal sectors of education and the economy in general.

These constraints notwithstanding, our interaction with researchers currently working in the area of equity and access in education in Sub-Saharan Africa as well as our involvement in and access to the work of FAWE both in Ghana and at the continental level provide a context for examining the challenges of providing secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa from a gender perspective, presenting interventions undertaken to respond to these challenges, and offering a future perspective.

## The Global and Regional Context

Secondary education is beginning to come into its own after two decades of concentration on primary education.

Universal Primary education has received a focus from the late 1980s (Ghana 1987) and into the 1990s. Stagnation in the late 1990s led to the creation of various platforms to revitalize commitment globally to UPS as a priority. These include the Millenium Development

Goals (MDGs). However, the International Expert Meeting on General Secondary Education in the 21st Century: Trends and Priorities held in May 2002 convened by UNESCO in Beijing China provides a clear indication of rising calls for secondary education to be given a priority while acknowledging the dilemma it poses such as “the balance between mass and selective schooling, general and specialized (vocational) education and cognitive and behavioral outcomes.”

The meeting urged partnership between governments and non-state providers to open up mass access education at the secondary level with greater flexibility in streaming practices to make available a wider range of choices, alternate channels and the option to return to preferred streams. Cost-effective innovative vocational education was advocated, because this continues to pose a challenge in the delivery of secondary level education. The future orientation of secondary education, it was felt, should be toward more flexibility in the organization of learning and greater responsiveness to the needs and circumstances of learners. An emerging thrust emphasized at the meeting was the role of secondary education in the provision of life-skills.

The push for reconstruction of secondary education has implications for girl’s education. Box 2 shows the EFA and MDG goals that relate to the education of adolescent girls.

The social and economic benefits of educating girls have been widely acknowledged by both governments and international agencies. Commitments have been made at various levels including internationally, at the 2000 World Education Forum, and the UN General summit, with world leaders committing to eliminating gender disparities in education by 2005 and achieving universal primary education and gender equality in education by 2015. Some governments translated these commitments into action by employing affirmative action policies and strategies. Just how effective have these policies been?

The participation of women in political and economic life has been made a key indicator of development by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In the 1998 Human Development Report for example, 22 African countries were designated as Medium Human Development Countries. Their net primary school enrollment was 88.5 percent while the net enrollment at secondary level was 59.9 percent. The rest of the countries (29) were defined as Low Human Development Countries with enrollments in the respective categories at 50.4 and 21.1 percent. If secondary school is seen as a pipeline to tertiary

#### **Box 2: EFA and MDG Goals Related to Secondary Education for Girls**

EFA Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs.

EFA Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality (World Education Forum 2000).

MDG Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE) and specifically Target 3, Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

MDG Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women; and specifically Target 4, eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015 (UN Millennium Development Declaration 2000; UN & UNDP 2004).

Source: UN Millenium Development Declaration (2000); UN and UNDP (2004).

education from where technocratic experts and decision makers are recruited in the contemporary socio-economic environment, then ratio of women with access to tertiary education has very serious implications for the secondary sector. It is estimated that only 2.5 percent of women in Sub-Saharan Africa have access to tertiary education. This might be compared to 49.8 percent of European women and 93.8 percent for Women in North America. These disparities confirm the negligible influence of women in the decisionmaking process. It is worth noting for envisioning the future, that “Increasing the participation rate of women in tertiary education can be one of the most critically important intervention not only to improve the position of women in Africa, but also to impact on political, social and economic development (UNESCO IICBA 2000).

## The Essence of Adolescence

As adolescents and young adults are the most likely section of the population to participate in secondary education, it is essential to take into consideration their physiological and sociological status when discussing the provision of secondary education in Africa because the fact of adolescence is itself a significant variable.

Africa has a youthful population which is yet to be sufficiently empowered to play its role in society. The majority of 21st century African youth are often confronted with the exacting consequences of the weak economies in which they live. They are the generation to be confronted with the consequences of prolonged conflict, environmental degradation, and the ravages of HIV/AIDS.

They are also paradoxically more exposed than any other generation to the opportunities offered by technologically advanced economies for positive self-development and for indulgence born of affluence. They are bombarded with a plethora of images in real time through information technology. Indeed, judging from the tragedy of the many deaths that have occurred among West African youth as they seek to cross the Atlantic Ocean and the Sahara towards Europe, they are willing to risk anything to have the access to these opportunities.

### *Female Adolescents*

From a gender perspective, adolescent and adult young males continue to be in a more socially-privileged position than their female counterparts. They are still more likely to be encouraged and supported to continue their education without being forced by tradition (early marriage) or by duties to the household to drop out from school. Young men have a better chance than young women to benefit from the privileges proffered by ancient patriarchal traditions while their female counterparts continue to struggle with onerous repercussions.

Sexual maturation is a decisive physiological factor of adolescence which demonstrates dramatic differences in the way it affects males and females and their participation in education.

The majority of African societies operate within the ethos of traditional cultural norms and practices in which adolescent males gain distinct patriarchal privileges. The responsibilities which go with the attainment of adulthood such as the norms attending to marriage

and parenting are often not enforced due to economic hardship. A male adolescent does not have to confront the embarrassment and discomfort of the physical manifestations of sexual maturation such as the possibility of soiling ones clothes in public or the pain of dysmenorrhoea. Society is also far more tolerant of early sexual activity among male adolescents. They are indeed unlikely to be made personally liable for the consequences of engaging in such activity. If their partner becomes pregnant for example, the likelihood is that their parents will take over the penalties and duties of seeing her through parturition. A male adolescent in school is most unlikely to be made to terminate his education or change schools as a result of a partner's pregnancy resulting from his sexual activity.

On the other hand, as far as adolescent females are concerned, sexual maturation presents them with numerous challenges which are a real threat to their participation and achievement in secondary education. National chapters of the Forum for African Women Educationalists, upon studying the situation in their countries, have unearthed evidence to demonstrate that poor management of sexual maturation may be preventing substantial numbers of young women from benefiting from secondary and technical and vocational education with the consequence of removing them from the pipeline towards middle-level and high-level skills, and thus condemning them to a vicious cycle of poverty.

In a collaboration with Makerere University, the Uganda Chapter of FAWEU discovered that high levels of absenteeism and dropout could be traced to menstruation and its consequences (FAWEU 2001). The study revealed that practices such as the use of banana fibers or sitting on heaps or sand in rural areas during menstruation (often because of lack of exposure to, or lack of affordability of more efficient sanitary materials) ensured that girls were absent from school for significant periods during the academic year. Secondly, the absence of toilet facilities where girls could change their sanitary pads in privacy has been identified as a major factor for absenteeism among girls. This has led to the construction of separate toilets for girls in mixed institutions in and Ghana, Uganda for example.

Pregnancy is a currently a wholly female challenge in the world of the African school girl. She is likely not only to be sent away from school but also refused re-entry into school to complete her education. This remains an emotionally charged matter, colored by moral stigmatization which is reinforced by the adoption of fundamentalist views taken from world religions. Several initiatives from the adoption of national policies to ensure re-entry (Zambia) to support groups among girls such as girl clubs (Zambia, Uganda, Kenya, Sierra Leone, and Senegal) have been instituted to ensure that girls are spared the denial of access to schooling due to pregnancy.

Rural African girls are also likely to be subject to the stringencies of early marriage. The Girls' Education Units of the Ghana Education Service operating in the Upper West, Upper East, and Northern Regions of Ghana for example, are alerted more and more when girls are being withdrawn from school. Officers have to make a persistent and personal commitment to sensitize the parents of the girls to ensure that the girls are permitted to complete the relevant cycle of education.

Girls from the age of 9 or so are deemed to be of vital importance to their families or the households in which they live and are likely to be drawn into household chores or into the economic activities of their mothers in particular. The size of the burden of mothers' work impacts directly on the amount of time spent by the prepubescent and adolescent girl on her school work.

In general, the poor rural adolescent girl in Africa is caught in a vice of poverty engendered by uneven development and lingering deleterious traditions. Thus, the likelihood that she will benefit from secondary education and remain in the pipeline towards higher education continues to be much lower than her male counterpart.

### *Global Prioritization of Girls' Education*

On the other hand, the progressive prioritization of girls educational within the context of policy commitments to education for all at global and national level over the past 20 years has led to improvements in girls' participation in education in Africa and the venturing of girls into fields from which they have hitherto been excluded.

The social and economic benefits of educating girls have been widely acknowledged by both governments and international agencies. Commitments have been made at various levels including internationally, at the 2000 Dakar conference and the UN General summit, with world leaders committing to eliminating gender disparities in education by 2005 and achieving universal primary education and gender equality in education by 2015. Some governments translated these commitments into action by employing affirmative action policies and strategies. Just how effective have these policies been?

This study after having established the state of girls' education on the continent and provided some reasons for prevailing conditions will highlight best practices in public policy and in interventions in international, national and local spheres which demonstrate possible sustainable remedies.

# Participation in Secondary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Global Picture

---

In this chapter, we will look at the global situation of gender participation in secondary education, focusing particularly on lower secondary education, followed by an analysis of trends in access to secondary education since 1990, and completed by an exploration of the transition between primary and lower secondary. This should allow the assessment of the levels of gender disparity in primary and secondary education. Though the focus is on secondary education, it cannot be disengaged from primary education, because both sub-sectors are interrelated. Universal primary education will not be achieved if there is not at least access to quality lower secondary education, and lower secondary education will not take off nor the gender gap reduced, if the essential foundations of primary education are weak and floundering.

## EFA and Secondary Education

Because access to post-primary education is an important determinant of primary school enrollment, it is equally important to expand and improve access to middle and secondary schools (World Bank 1996). After some years of stagnation in the 1990s, it became essential to devise means to re-invigorate the process for reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) targets.

The efforts to stimulate the process to achieve these goals in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have resulted in significant enrollment increases at the primary level with considerable public investment and external support directed towards universalizing primary schooling. Consequently, there is growing pressure to expand access to junior and senior secondary education. This demand comes from youth, parents, and communities. The social and economic benefits of further learning (beyond primary) are thought to be

considerable<sup>2</sup> and will be elaborated upon within the parameters of the Study on Secondary Education in Africa.<sup>3</sup> Achieving the targets for quality primary education for all by 2015 remains a challenge for most Sub-Saharan countries. This is exemplified by the 1999 African EFA meeting held in December 1999 during which a framework was developed for achieving 99 percent transition from primary to secondary level by the year 2015.

## Definition of Terms

Our analysis will be based on a number of useful concepts which act as indicators for assessing the effectiveness of educational policy. The Gross Enrollment Rate measures the number of children enrolled against the assumed population of children within the age range. The net enrollment rate is based on the actual number of pupils enrolled. Gender parity is at the crux of this analysis. Through the Gender Parity Index (GPI), it is possible to demonstrate progress if any, towards parity. The GPI, commonly used to assess gender differences, is the value of an indicator for girls divided by that for boys. A value of less than one indicates differences in favor of boys, whereas a value near one indicates that parity has been more or less achieved. Gender parity is considered to have been attained when the GPI lies between 0.97 and 1.03 (UNESCO 2004). Care should be taken in interpreting the GPI for enrollment since, for example, it may overstate the level of disparity in countries where differences in enrollment ratios are due to higher repetition rates for either boys or girls. It would also be interesting to analyze the cumulative effects of gender disparity at the primary level and those at the transition to lower secondary, as well as considering changes in gender disparity over time. Finally, levels of secondary enrollment can be associated with the levels of national wealth: low, middle and high. This correlation leads to revelations of the correlation between wealth and participation/performance in education.

## Gender Equity and Education

Gender equity at the primary level has been the focus of considerable attention within the Education For All Framework of Action, but much less so at the secondary level. Evidence of gender inequity and inequality in terms of access, retention and performance in secondary education in SSA raises many questions. The transition rate for girls from primary to secondary is 65.3 percent compared 62.6 percent for boys. The repetition rates for girls are high (19.4 percent) but lower than for boys. Yet secondary GER for girls is 23 percent compared to 30 percent for boys (2001), and the GPI declined from .81 in 1990 to .80 in 1998 to .79 in 2001 (UNESCO 2004). The 2004 EFA Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO 2004) summarizes:

---

2. Keith M. Lewin, in "Mapping the Missing Link; Planning and Financing Secondary Education Development in Sub-Saharan Africa" (SEIA 2; 2004) presents several reasons for attention to secondary education development at this point.

3. SEIA (forthcoming), "The economic case for investments in secondary education in SSA: A Review of the Evidence (terms of reference)."

Disparities in intake rates at the secondary level are much reduced in comparison with primary. This suggests that the difficulties hindering girls' access to primary do not prevent them from performing as well or better once they are enrolled. This does not imply, however, that a smooth secondary school career in secondary education will automatically follow. At this level of education other problems—puberty, early marriage, and pregnancy—have a strong influence on the gendered patterns of school participation and retention.

It is thus not surprising that in SSA only 38 percent of the teachers in primary and 20 percent in secondary schools are female.<sup>4</sup> The performance of girls in science subjects is also a concern and is reflected in the relatively low number of females enrolled in these disciplines at the tertiary level (Kane 2004).

## Secondary Education in SSA

In most cross-national comparisons, lower and upper levels of secondary education are treated as one compact sub-sector (secondary education), overlooking the fragmented and diversified character of this educational component. In some countries, lower secondary forms part of an extended basic education (Ghana, Nigeria) and is provided in the same institutions and sometimes taught by the same teachers as for primary education. In other countries, lower secondary is provided in the same institutions as upper secondary; specialized courses are taught by teachers with higher qualifications. Where examinations and the delivery of a certificate mark the transition between lower and upper levels; many students terminate with this certificate and for various reasons are unable to make the transition to the upper secondary level. Upper secondary education aims at providing a bridge between school and tertiary education or preparing the students to enter the labor market, sometimes through technical and vocational training including livelihoods. While a number of post-basic vocational programs are often developed as part of educational reform programs, these have not on the whole been very successful or sustained.

Africa has the lowest level of lower secondary participation (45 percent) compared to other regions (West Asia 69 percent; Europe, South America 100 percent; East Asia and Oceania greater than 90 percent). Cape Verde, Seychelles, South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia are the only Sub-Saharan countries with ratios above 70 percent. Lower secondary enrollment ratios are below 40 percent in half of the countries in Africa. In Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Niger, and Rwanda, ratios are between 10 and 20 percent, which is a fifth of the global average of 79 percent for gross lower secondary school-age population (usually from age 10 or 11 to 14 or 15). Twenty-two African countries have compulsory lower secondary education (the lowest proportion of countries of any region).

National policies often place different emphases on the development of each level of secondary education as reflected by participation ratios. For example, the lower secondary enrollment ratio in Burkina Faso is similar to Rwanda, but the upper secondary ratio in Burkina Faso is one-half of that in Rwanda. Upper secondary enrollment ratios in Sierra Leone and Mauritania are two to three times higher than in Senegal and Ethiopia, despite

4. In South and West Asia, 36 percent of primary teachers and 24 percent of secondary teachers are female. Other regions are considerably higher.

similar ratios at the lower secondary level. The greatest relative differences between enrollment ratios are found in Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, and Niger, where upper secondary ratios are less than one-third of those at lower secondary level. Countries with the smallest relative difference between lower and upper secondary ratios are Mauritania, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone.

The gross enrollment rate (GER) for upper secondary is lowest in Africa (29 percent) as compared to other regions (Europe greater than 100 percent; Asia 50 percent, with West Asia at 40 percent and East Asia at 48 percent).

## Primary Completion and the Transition to Lower Secondary Education

Participation in secondary education is partly determined by factors occurring at the primary level. The number of children who take up studies at the secondary level depends on the number who enter and complete primary education and who subsequently are accepted for entry at the secondary level. Current lower secondary entry and enrollment ratios are therefore a consequence of the processes in primary education. The lowest entry ratios to the last grade of primary are in Sub-Saharan Africa where ratios exceed 90 percent in only 8 out of 44 countries, namely Botswana, Cape Verde, Mauritius, Seychelles, and South Africa. Twenty-two African countries have compulsory lower secondary education (the lowest proportion of countries of any region).

Looking forward, in countries where universal primary completion is still to be achieved, increasing numbers of children completing primary school will result in pressure for more places at the secondary level. It takes some years for this measure of completion to be affected by policy changes because it cannot be calculated until the end of a complete cycle of primary education. This explains why current intake ratios to the last grade do not reflect the substantially increased participation since 1998 in Africa.

Current entry ratios into the first grade, together with transition rates, provide the basis for estimating the number of children who could be expected to complete a full cycle of primary education, assuming that the education system continues to function as observed today (namely that there is no change in the flow rates). The expected number of children who will complete primary education, based on new entrants into grade 1, better captures how recent policies may eventually translate into future outputs.

According to UIS/UNESCO, current ratios of entry into the first grade predict no change in the near future for 11 countries globally. The intake to the last grade in Cameroon, Chad, Mali, and Mauritania is likely to remain below 60 percent for the next five or six years.

More alarmingly, in Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Malawi, Swaziland, and Togo, the intake into the last grade will decline, meaning that even fewer children will complete primary education. In most of these countries, increased dropout rates is the main explanation. For 22 countries, the ratio of children entering the last grade of primary education is expected to increase by at least 5 percent over the next national primary school cycle. In Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Comoros, Eritrea, Madagascar, Niger, Rwanda and Tanzania, ratios are expected to increase by more than one-third, and these countries should therefore expect growing pressure for entry into the lower secondary level in the near future.

However, not all children completing the full primary cycle have the opportunity to enter secondary education. In some countries, the number of lower secondary places is markedly

less than the number of primary completers. Access to lower secondary may be controlled by policies determining the concept of graduation from primary education. Thus, in some countries, graduation ratios reflect the number of pupils who obtain access to secondary education rather than the number who “successfully complete” primary education. For the purposes of international comparisons, a primary graduate is defined as one who has successfully completed the final grade of primary school according to national graduation criteria, which include both standardized and non-standardized exams and teacher assessment. In some countries, pupils automatically make the transition to lower secondary level.

Indicators of primary completion help to estimate the number of children who can potentially enter lower secondary education, whereas the transition rate to secondary education indicates how many of them actually enter. In one in four countries of Africa, half the children enrolled at the end of primary school do not enroll at the secondary level in the following year. In another quarter of the countries, at least one in three students does not continue to secondary education. Only one-quarter of the countries reach transition rates similar to those of other regions (exceeding 80 percent). Those with high levels of transition are Botswana, Namibia, and Seychelles, and those with low levels include Ethiopia, Ghana, and Sudan.

## Gender Disparity in Secondary Education: A Widening Gap

As has been indicated in the introduction, the Millennium Development Goals challenge all UN member states to “eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.”

Table 1 demonstrates the gender and regional disparities in junior secondary school within a single country (Senegal).

The current state of gender disparity can be assessed with data from the *Global Education Digest 2005* from UNESCO, which has estimates for the male and female secondary school net enrollment ratio (NER) in 141 countries as found in Table 2 below.

| Regions     | GER males | GER females | GER total |
|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Dakar       | 43.3      | 32.0        | 37.3      |
| Ziguinchor  | 47.0      | 25.2        | 36.9      |
| Diourbel    | 13.8      | 7.0         | 10.2      |
| Saint-Louis | 20.9      | 11.0        | 15.6      |
| Tambacounda | 16.7      | 6.9         | 11.6      |
| Kaolack     | 20.3      | 9.7         | 14.7      |
| Thies       | 30.3      | 21.0        | 25.7      |
| Louga       | 17.5      | 8.2         | 12.7      |
| Fatick      | 23.9      | 13.1        | 18.4      |
| Kolda       | 20.5      | 6.7         | 13.7      |
| Senegal     | 28.6      | 17.6        | 22.9      |

Source: Ministry of Education, 2001; FAWE, 2004e.

Table 2. Trends in Basic or Proxy Indicators to Measure EFA Goals 4 and 5

|                              |   | Goal 5                             |         |          |         |          |         |                                      |        |       |         |         |          |
|------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|--------------------------------------|--------|-------|---------|---------|----------|
|                              |   | Gender Parity in Primary Education |         |          |         |          |         | Gender Parity in Secondary Education |        |       |         |         |          |
|                              |   | Gross Enrollment Ratio (%)         |         |          |         |          |         | Gross Enrollment Ratio (%)           |        |       |         |         |          |
| Country or Territory         |   | 1990                               |         | 1998     |         | 2001     |         | 1990                                 |        | 1998  |         | 2001    |          |
|                              |   | Total                              | GPI     | Total    | GPI     | Total    | GPI     | Total                                | GPI    | Total | GPI     | Total   | GPI      |
| Sub-Saharan Africa           |   |                                    |         |          |         |          |         |                                      |        |       |         |         |          |
| Angola                       |   | 92.0                               | 0.92 *  | 97.1     | 0.83    | ...      | ...     | 12.1                                 | ...    | 14.7  | ...     | 19.1    | 0.78     |
| Benin                        |   | 58.6                               | 0.50    | 82.7     | 0.65    | 104.1    | 0.70    | 11.7                                 | 0.41   | 21.1  | 0.45    | 26.0    | ** 0.46  |
| Botswana                     |   | 103.0                              | 1.08    | 102.8    | 1.00    | 103.3    | 1.00    | 37.6                                 | 1.12   | 71.2  | 1.10    | 72.7    | 1.06     |
| Burkina Faso                 | * | 32.5                               | 0.63    | 41.8     | 0.68    | 43.6     | ** 0.71 | 6.7                                  | 0.52   | 9.4   | 0.60    | 10.2    | ** 0.65  |
| Burundi                      |   | 71.5                               | 0.84    | 50.2     | ** 0.82 | 71.0     | 0.79    | 5.5                                  | 0.58   | 7.1   | ** 0.84 | ** 10.7 | ** 0.73  |
| Cameroon                     | * | 99.5                               | 0.86    | 87.5     | 0.82    | 106.7    | * 0.86  | 27.5                                 | 0.71   | 26.5  | ** 0.82 | ** 32.6 | ** 0.82  |
| Cape Verde                   |   | 113.8                              | 0.94    | ** 125.6 | 0.96    | 122.6    | 0.96    | 20.9                                 | *      | 61.7  | **      | 65.9    | 1.05     |
| Central African Republic     | * | 65.5                               | 0.63    | ...      | ...     | 66.1     | * 0.67  | 11.5                                 | 0.40   | ...   | ...     | ...     | ...      |
| Chad                         |   | 54.7                               | 0.45    | 67.0     | 0.58    | 73.4     | ** 0.63 | 7.0                                  | 0.20   | 10.7  | 0.26    | 11.2    | **z 0.28 |
| Comoros                      |   | 75.0                               | 0.73    | 75.2     | 0.85    | 89.6     | 0.82    | 17.6                                 | * 0.65 | 24.8  | 0.81    | 27.7    | 0.84     |
| Congo                        |   | 116.8                              | 0.90    | 49.6     | 0.95    | 85.5     | 0.93    | 46.2                                 | 0.72   | ...   | ...     | 32.0    | ** 0.71  |
| Côte d'Ivoire                |   | 65.1                               | 0.71    | 73.1     | 0.75    | 80.3     | 0.74    | 21.3                                 | 0.48   | 22.5  | ** 0.54 | ** 22.8 | **y 0.54 |
| Democratic Rep. of the Congo |   | 70.6                               | 0.75    | 49.6     | 0.90    | ...      | ...     | ...                                  | ...    | ...   | ...     | ...     | ...      |
| Equatorial Guinea            |   | 162.6                              | ** 0.95 | ** 131.3 | 0.91    | ** 126.2 | 0.91    | ...                                  | ...    | ...   | ...     | 29.7    | ** 0.57  |
| Eritrea                      |   | 21.3                               | 0.94    | 53.2     | 0.83    | 60.5     | 0.81    | ...                                  | ...    | 23.3  | 0.69    | 27.6    | 0.65     |



|                         |         |         |       |         |          |         |         |      |       |         |         |          |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|-------|---------|----------|---------|---------|------|-------|---------|---------|----------|
| Ethiopia                | 31.8    | 0.66    | 49.9  | 0.60    | 63.9     | 0.71    | 13.5    | 0.75 | 12.9  | 0.67    | 19.0    | 0.62     |
| Gabon                   | 141.8   | ** 0.98 | 134.1 | 1.00    | 134.4    | 0.99    | ...     | ...  | 45.7  | 0.86    | 50.9    | ** ...   |
| Gambia                  | 61.1    | 0.68    | 79.9  | 0.85    | 78.9     | ** 0.92 | ** 18.4 | 0.49 | 30.8  | 0.66    | 34.3    | ** 0.71  |
| Ghana                   | 72.1    | 0.83    | 76.8  | 0.90    | 81.4     | 0.91    | 34.7    | 0.63 | 36.7  | 0.78    | 37.6    | ** 0.82  |
| Guinea                  | 34.0    | 0.47    | 58.4  | 0.63    | 77.1     | 0.75    | 9.5     | 0.33 | 13.9  | ** 0.36 | ** ...  | ...      |
| Guinea-Bissau           | 49.9    | ** 0.55 | ...   | ...     | 69.7     | Y 0.67  | Y ...   | ...  | ...   | ...     | 17.8    | Y 0.54   |
| Kenya                   | 94.5    | 0.95    | 90.2  | 0.98    | 96.0     | 0.98    | 23.8    | 0.74 | 29.9  | ** 0.90 | ** 32.0 | 0.90     |
| Lesotho                 | * 112.1 | 1.21    | 109.2 | 1.08    | 124.3    | 1.02    | 25.4    | 1.47 | 31.7  | 1.39    | 33.7    | 1.26     |
| Liberia                 | ...     | ...     | 89.6  | 0.74    | 105.4    | Y 0.73  | Y ...   | ...  | 30.5  | 0.65    | 34.1    | Y 0.69   |
| Madagascar              | 93.6    | 0.98    | 95.6  | 0.97    | 104.2    | 0.96    | 17.6    | 0.97 | 14.3  | ** 0.96 | ** ...  | ...      |
| Malawi                  | 68.0    | 0.83    | 146.2 | 0.95    | ** 145.8 | 0.96    | 8.0     | 0.46 | 36.1  | 0.69    | ** 34.0 | 0.76     |
| Mali                    | * 25.3  | 0.60    | 48.8  | 0.71    | 57.0     | 0.75    | 6.6     | 0.51 | 13.6  | 0.53    | ...     | ...      |
| Mauritius               | * 109.2 | 1.00    | 107.6 | 1.00    | 106.0    | 1.00    | 52.9    | 1.01 | 70.3  | 1.01    | 79.5    | 0.96     |
| Mozambique              | 63.9    | 0.76    | 81.2  | ** 0.74 | ** 98.9  | 0.79    | 6.9     | 0.57 | 9.8   | ** 0.68 | ** 13.3 | 0.66     |
| Namibia                 | 123.9   | 1.09    | 113.9 | 1.01    | 106.0    | 1.01    | 38.9    | 1.26 | 57.3  | 1.15    | 61.4    | 1.14     |
| Niger                   | 27.8    | 0.58    | 30.9  | 0.67    | 40.0     | 0.68    | 6.5     | 0.43 | 6.7   | 0.63    | 6.5     | 0.65     |
| Nigeria                 | 91.9    | 0.78    | 86.1  | ** 0.76 | ** 96.5  | ** 0.80 | ** 24.8 | 0.77 | ...   | ...     | ...     | ...      |
| Rwanda                  | 71.3    | 0.98    | 118.6 | 0.97    | 117.0    | 0.99    | 8.2     | 0.76 | 9.6   | 0.88    | 14.4    | ** 0.88  |
| Sao Tome and Principe   | ...     | ...     | 107.1 | 0.96    | 126.4    | ** 0.94 | ** ...  | ...  | ...   | ...     | 39.2    | ** 0.84  |
| Senegal                 | 57.5    | 0.73    | 68.6  | 0.86    | ** 75.3  | 0.91    | 16.3    | 0.53 | 16.7  | ** 0.64 | ** 18.7 | ** 0.67  |
| Seychelles <sup>1</sup> | ...     | ...     | 112.8 | 0.98    | 115.7    | 0.99    | ...     | ...  | 114.0 | 1.00    | 110.0   | 1.05     |
| Sierra Leone            | 50.3    | 0.69    | ...   | ...     | 78.9     | Z 0.70  | Z 16.6  | 0.57 | ...   | ...     | 26.4    | Z 0.70   |
| Somalia                 | ...     | ...     | ...   | ...     | ...      | ...     | ...     | ...  | ...   | ...     | ...     | ...      |
| South Africa            | 106.6   | 0.99    | 114.4 | * 0.97  | * 105.1  | 0.96    | 66.3    | 1.16 | 89.8  | * 1.13  | * 86.4  | ** 1.09  |
| Swaziland               | 97.7    | 0.98    | 104.3 | 0.95    | 100.4    | 0.95    | 41.3    | 0.93 | 48.4  | 1.00    | 45.2    | 1.00     |
| Togo                    | 110.0   | 0.66    | 132.3 | 0.76    | 124.2    | 0.82    | 22.7    | 0.34 | 33.6  | 0.40    | 36.5    | **y 0.44 |

(continued)





|                                  |       |      |       |      |       |      |      |      |       |      |       |      |
|----------------------------------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|------|------|-------|------|-------|------|
| Latin America and the Caribbean  | 104.3 | 0.98 | 121.3 | 0.98 | 119.9 | 0.98 | 53.3 | 1.01 | 71.9  | 1.09 | 86.2  | 1.07 |
| North America and Western Europe | 104.0 | 0.99 | 102.5 | 1.01 | 100.8 | 1.00 | 98.5 | 1.05 | 105.4 | 1.01 | 107.6 | 1.03 |
| South and West Asia              | 92.2  | 0.76 | 94.7  | 0.83 | 93.9  | 0.85 | 33.1 | 0.44 | 45.6  | 0.74 | 48.3  | 0.79 |
| Sub-Saharan Africa               | 73.5  | 0.83 | 79.1  | 0.84 | 84.9  | 0.86 | 17.6 | 0.81 | 24.6  | 0.80 | 26.8  | 0.79 |

<sup>1</sup> National population data were used to calculate enrollment ratios.

<sup>2</sup> Enrollment ratios were not calculated due to lack of United Nations population data by age.

<sup>3</sup> Enrollment ratios were not calculated due to inconsistencies between enrollment and the United Nations population data.

(y) Data are for 1999/2000.

(z) Data are for 2000/2001.

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.



While there are signs of progress in terms of gender parity at the primary level, the gap is still noticeable at the secondary level. Reaching equal opportunity in access to education is an important component of the international goals. The first time-bound Millennium Development Goal required that girls and boys should have equal access to primary and secondary education by 2005 (UNESCO 2003).

Gender parity, however, should be concerned not only with access to education but also with progression and completion of schooling. The next subsection examines more closely parity between girls and boys at the point of entry into secondary school. Gender differences at secondary level are inevitably accumulated over a school career. Entry and transition rates can identify where gender disparities occur and whether they change as children move through the education system.

### *Gender Disparities in Primary and Secondary School Participation*

About 56 percent of children live in countries with gender disparity in primary gross enrollment ratios and, not surprisingly, it is the girls who are generally disadvantaged. One in ten children live in countries where the GPI for primary education is less than 0.85, indicating that for every 100 boys fewer than 85 girls are enrolled. Gender disparity is slightly more widespread in lower secondary education. Only 58 percent of children live in countries with equal participation in lower secondary education. While at the primary level only 13 percent of children live in countries where gross enrollment ratios for girls do not even reach 85 percent of the value for boys (GPI less than 0.85), this is the case for 33 percent of children of lower secondary school-age. In this case, 13 percent of children live in countries where lower secondary gross enrollment ratios for girls are substantially higher than for boys.

Disparities increase further at the upper secondary level, where only 13 percent of the world's relevant population lives in countries with equal access. In a number of countries, gender disparities in secondary education enrollment favor girls. At the upper secondary level, this is true for 15 percent of children. Disadvantages for girls are more common in Africa and in parts of Asia. Of the 53 countries with a GPI below 0.97, 31 are in Africa, 17 in Asia, and just 5 in the rest of the world.

### *Gender Disparities in Access to Lower Secondary Education*

Gender differences at secondary level can emanate from differences at any of the preceding stages, at entry to primary education, completion of primary education and at the transition to lower secondary education. However, data are not always available to enable their effects to be distinguished. Moreover, as outlined earlier, policy changes may take time to be reflected by the data.

Gender disparities against girls are highest in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, and Togo, with fewer than 60 girls per 100 boys entering secondary education.

According to UIS/UNESCO, gender disparities are already prevalent at primary education and greatly exceed the disparities in access to lower secondary. In Ethiopia and Benin, the two countries with the greatest gender disparity, differences are entirely the result of disparity in primary education. It is interesting to note that girls completing primary education in Uganda and Zambia have a greater chance than boys to move from primary to

lower secondary. Yet, boys were favored so strongly at primary level that far more of them entered lower secondary than girls.

There are exceptions to this pattern. In Congo, gender equality is reached at the end of primary education, but girls who complete primary education are far less likely to continue than boys. In Ghana, gender differences at the lower secondary level are mainly due to gender disparities at the transition to the secondary level. In countries where boys are disadvantaged, this occurs mainly at the transition to the secondary level.

### *Expected Changes to Gender Disparities in Secondary School Participation*

Pupils entering lower secondary education in 2002 had started primary education between four and seven years earlier. Between 1998 and 2002, substantial changes took place in the entry to primary education in some countries, but these changes will take time to be reflected at secondary level. It can be expected that gender differences will change in the near future in countries where gender differences have changed at the primary level.

One way to forecast gender disparity at entry to lower secondary is to apply the latest available transition rates to the expected number of children who will reach the last grade of primary.

Gender disparities in the first year of lower secondary can be predicted, on the assumption that gender disparities on entry and at transition will continue. For most countries gender parity is expected to improve, especially in Benin, Burkina Faso, and Mozambique. In Uganda, existing gender disparities probably will be reversed and girls can be expected to outnumber boys, whereas in Swaziland the reversal favors boys.

For a number of countries with significant gender disparities (for example, Congo, Eritrea and Niger), the expected improvements will be only slight.

Our analysis is based on the assumption that what happens in secondary is largely the result of what has happened or what is happening in primary education—and the potential of flow indicators to forecast the future impact of current policies.

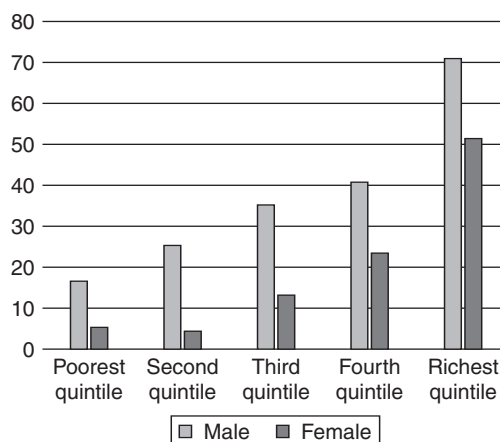
### *Wealth as a Factor*

Levels of secondary enrollment are associated with the levels of national wealth: low middle- and high-income countries report enrollment rates which are above 90 percent. Eritrea, Malawi, Yemen, and Zambia have secondary enrollment ratios three to five times higher than that of Burundi and Niger, despite similar or lower levels of GDP per capita. In addition, it will be important to analyze to what extent the disparity in secondary education reflects the impact of the wealth effect at the primary level (the children, especially the girls, of the poor have low primary participation and completion rates) and to what extent there is an independent wealth effect at the secondary level (poor girls, even when they reach the final primary grade, are less likely to have a passing grade on the secondary school entrance examination, are more likely to be deterred by school fees, more likely to drop out and less likely to complete). Table 3 illustrates further factors affecting access and participation in secondary education, corroborating the previous point. Not only are secondary school enrollments related to national wealth, but they appear also to be related to location and relative wealth of the family. However, as is shown below in the case of Benin, girls may still not automatically benefit from secondary education even where they come from

**Table 3. Share of Children 15–19 Who Have Completed Primary School, by Gender (percent)**

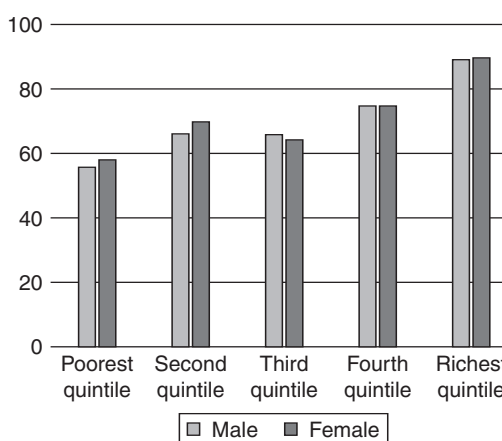
School attendance rates are low in Benin, except among the rich. Poor children rarely complete school, and even among rich families girls have few opportunities to complete primary education.

**Benin, by wealth quintile, 2002**



A recent survey in Malawi found almost equal completion rates for boys and girls, although children of the poorest families are still less likely to attend school.

**Malawi, by wealth quintile, 2000**



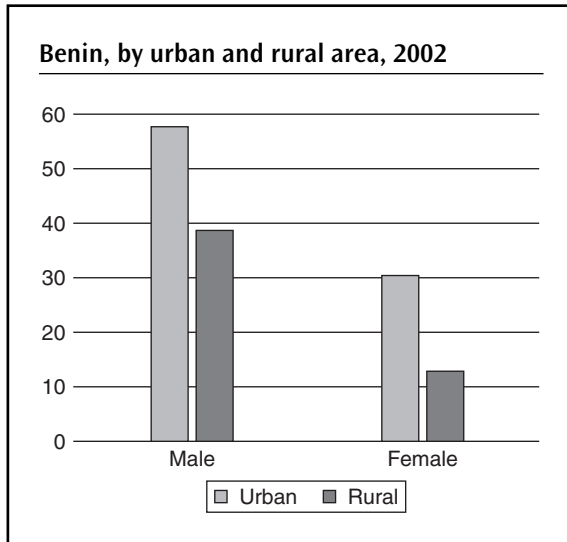
wealthy backgrounds. This raises the need to examine the sociocultural factors in rural settings for example affecting the participation of girls in secondary education.

### *Constraints of Data Base*

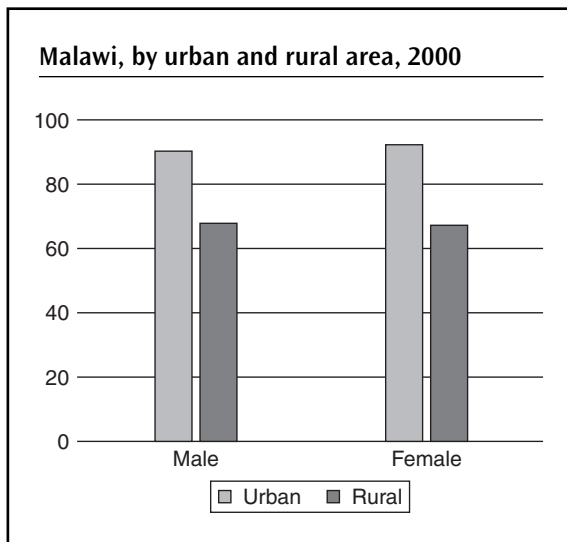
These data are regional averages, which hide a wide variation of situations between and within countries. Moreover, there are likely to be significant differences in the way gender

**Table 3. Share of Children 15–19 Who Have Completed Primary School, by Gender (percent) (continued)**

In Benin efforts to increase girls' attendance will have to improve the accessibility of schools and overcome the reluctance of rural families to send their daughters to school.



In Malawi, where completion rates have risen in recent years, rural areas still lag, but boys and girls are represented equally among those who complete primary school.



Source: World Bank staff estimates based on Demographic and Health Surveys.

issues present themselves at the junior and senior secondary education level. Analyzing and understanding these variations between countries is important as this involves explaining the factors that have allowed some countries to reach a much higher level of female enrollment and graduation than others.



# Factors Affecting the Participation of Girls in Secondary Education

---

## Economic Policies, Growth, and Development

### *Policy Context and Expenditures*

The overall effect of macroeconomic policies adopted by African countries in the 1980s and early 1990s has been evaluated from many perspective including the gender perspective.

Economic growth and structural reform are commonly promoted as strategies to eradicate gender inequality at all levels and in all sectors, subsequently enhancing the status of women and promoting young girls' education in developing countries. This perception is not supported by assessments of the impact of economic reform policies which tend to suggest that that most of the usual indicators of structural adjustment (fiscal deficit, taxes, public sector expenditures, exports within national economies) do not represent a significant improvement in the overall status of girls and women in Africa (Adomako Ampofo and others 2004; Johnson and Kyle 2001).

One important enigma relates to expenditures in education. Decline of gender inequalities has been most significant in countries characterized by higher levels (initially and over time) of expenditures in education (Ghana, Malawi, Tanzania). The impact of structural adjustment on gender inequalities translated by girls' access to education is therefore likely to be more or less important depending on cutbacks or increases in educational expenditures integrated in such policies and also on the overall effect of structural adjustment on the livelihoods of women (Buchman 1996; Quist 2003).

Referring to Buchman (1996), Johnson and Kyle (2001) highlight her observations that over the 1975–85 period structural adjustment had a negative impact on female secondary enrollment, while suggesting that higher levels of educational expenditures might lead to greater gender equality, which in turn is liable to have a significant and positive



effect on the overall economic growth. In turn, economic growth is associated more closely with participation rates in secondary level than in primary level, whereas development is constrained in countries where the labor force has limited resources of secondary school graduates.

An assessment of economic policies at the secondary school level should in fact have a baseline of the foundational conditions which vary enormously across countries in Sub-Saharan Africa; these include the policy context within which there is planned expansion of secondary level schooling from the start. Many countries have yet to achieve universal primary schooling in terms of access, retention, equity, and quality, and therefore may not have taken the next educational level into consideration.

### *Selectivity Versus Mass Opportunity*

The determinant role of the policy context in selectivity versus mass opportunity is illustrated by the case of Malawi where access to secondary school was constrained to very low levels by deliberate policy acts such that fewer than 10 percent participated in any form of secondary schooling until the mid-1990s. Those who could not access the public secondary schools had the option of turning to non-government providers if they could afford it, or participating in the obsolete Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE) system which was of low quality and achieved pass rates at the secondary school leaving certificate of less than 10 percent.

Excess demand for access to secondary school in Malawi is a clear consequence of expanding primary enrollments, the lack of growth in conventional government school places, and the perceived low quality of the Community Day Secondary Schools<sup>5</sup> (CDSS) that have partly replaced the MCDE institutions (Lewin and Sayed 2005). At the same time, public costs of secondary education are high at about 30 percent of GDP per capita. Fees in private schools are more than 50 times that in public schools. The enrollment rate at secondary level is dependent upon the rate of completion of the primary level—significantly only a small proportion of poor pupils reach the last four standards of primary school. The question is whether progression from primary to lower-secondary education is significantly smaller than grade progression within primary level and examining the causal factors of any disparity. In fact, Al Samarrai and Zaman (2002) remark that although there had been great access to primary school for poorer socio-economic groups, it is unlikely that the gains to these groups in terms of primary school completion will be as great. Data on survival to Grade 6 are limited, but of the 23 countries for which figures are available, only four (Botswana, Mauritius, Cameroon, and the Republic of Congo) are reported to have survival rates of over 90 percent for girls, although 12 of the 23 indicate gender parity or a gap in favor of girls.

At policy level, the selectivity of secondary schools (or particular streams within the overall sub-sector) obviously has implications for the equitable allocation of educational

---

5. Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS) are community-established schools which have had minimal support from the government in terms of teachers' salaries and teaching resources. The community uses school fees to buy equipment and textbooks and to further develop the school. Volunteers teach Physical Science, Mathematics, Biology, and English and are encouraged to integrate Girls' Education and Life Skills into lessons by utilizing Community Content Based Instruction (CCBI) techniques.

and job opportunities. Governments often decide that access to secondary schooling must be opened more widely to signal that society is becoming more equitable—hence, the strategy of making lower-secondary grades part of the primary school system. When lower-secondary education turns largely into a continuation of primary education and constitutes extended basic education, it benefits girls, not only in terms of providing access to upper secondary education, but it has more externality effects and return on investment than provision to less-mature primary school-age children. These benefits include lower fertility rate as girls remain in school (when they reach puberty) within a continuous process; life skills acquisition allows them to contribute to better family care and better nutritional habits. Many of these benefits seem to accrue particularly at ages that are covered by the lower-secondary cycle (Grades 7 and 9), an issue of some relevance to the question of subsidizing lower-secondary education. Also, the benefits of this type of girls' education have been shown to be larger than that for boys', an argument for improving the gender balance in lower-secondary education enrollment (Holsinger and Cowell 2000).

In a country like Malawi, which has a long primary school cycle of eight years instead of an average of six years, girls enter secondary school at puberty and adolescent stages, that is, at an age where they are considered marriageable or required for labor. The interruption in schooling at the end of primary level is a gap more difficult to bridge for girls. Official starting age for primary school in Malawi is six and the primary level lasts for eight years. However, many children do not start school until they are 10 or 11, which means that many girls in Standards 1 or 2 are already on the brink of puberty, initiation, and marriage. Parents worry about their daughters becoming pregnant while in school (prior to 1993 pregnant school girls were permanently expelled from the school system). Most girls did not expect to be educated beyond primary school, especially because they hoped to marry, and often believe men did not want educated wives (Wolf and Kainja 1999).

## Equity, Financial Measures, and Good Governance

### *Poverty, User Fees, and Education Rights*

Achieving equity at the first level of schooling is a matter of both increasing the demand for education and meeting that demand through financing and special measures. Financing is important at all levels for those who cannot afford to go to school because they and their parents cannot pay for the services. Special measures tend to be concentrated on the lower levels of education. They include recruiting more female teachers to provide role models for girls, making special education available, providing bilingual education in countries with linguistic diversity, and conducting health and nutrition programs. Taken together, these foundational measures amount to providing universal access to learning (not just universal school attendance) at the primary level, which opens the way to equity at all levels of the education system (World Bank 1995).

If states have a legal and moral obligation to provide education as a fundamental human right together with healthcare, these public services remain unaffordable for many households who cannot meet school fees or healthcare cost sharing.

Parents have extreme difficulty in meeting direct and indirect primary education costs such as formal school fees, levies for registration and examinations, tutoring, uniforms, books and materials, as well as compulsory in-kind contributions requested for school

construction and repairs. In this context, it is hardly thinkable for households to invest in their children's secondary education. Children do not enroll in schools or drop out early due to financial constraints as well as poor learning environment. The Kenyan experience in the 1970s and 1980s shows that informal school fees discourage enrollment. After tuition-free education was begun in 1974, enrollments in grade 1 of primary school increased 145 percent for boys and 161 percent for girls. Yet, communities were then allowed to introduce other school fees that quadrupled the cost of education in some districts leading to higher dropouts. In some districts, 40 percent of dropouts were due to high school fees.

In addition, households increasingly have to meet the growing trend of providing qualitative support aimed at improving accountability of service providers and "ownership" by the community at local level. This includes participation in management, administration, planning and budgeting, often mobilized through community level associations and committees. One of the key premises around this approach is that households are more willing to pay for services where they have some control over how the resources are used. Still, non-monetary support also carries its real indirect costs for households and can threaten equity objectives—especially when these contributions are factored into the cost structure of a service (CHER 2002).

In many African countries, user fees have been introduced as an *ad hoc* response to expenditure cuts—either imposed by the IMF and the World Bank, or by falling revenues. Between 1985 and 1995, per student public spending on primary education actually fell at a time that it increased threefold for every other developing region. Throughout the 1980s and much of the 1990s, the World Bank especially pushed user fees on the grounds that low demand for poor quality services, rather than cost, was the principal barrier to expanding access. These arguments in favor of cost sharing were easiest to advance in countries in dire need of expanding the resource envelope for health and education, Ghana and Malawi, for example, pursued cost sharing on this basis, thus fitting into the framework promoted by the World Bank. Regardless of the rationale underlying their introduction, fees have frequently had an effect of restricting access according to ability to pay. In the two years after fees were introduced in Malawi's schools in the 1980s, enrollment rates fell by more than 5 percent. In the case of Ghana this did not happen, but a subsequent positive response to the introduction of fee-free education at the basic level (bringing about the attainment of parity at primary level by mid-2007) demonstrates clearly that a stagnation in enrollment numbers may have been due to inability of parents to bear the cost.

Direct and indirect costs of education are deterrents to sending girls to schools. When education is not mandatory, parents who incur schooling costs which may be as much as 5–20 percent of the family income choose to keep their children out of school. Poor parents often find it difficult to make a projection of the payoff of their children's education and cannot capture all the benefits of schooling, because these accrue across a child's lifetime (Herz and Sperling 2004) and are difficult to assess in the immediate or short term. Evidence also shows that given the choice between sending a boy or a girl to school, families will prefer to send the boy to school for various reasons (opportunity costs, safety, early marriage, cultural and social values). Girls are withheld from school to tend to younger siblings, to earn wages, to do household chores or farm work. These costs may be as important as or more important than the enrollment fees. In effect, it appears in some cases that it is not what the child must pay that is the problem; it is what they give up in the time involved in schooling.

Conversely, the experience of countries where fees have been eliminated demonstrates the impact of cost on access. In Uganda in 1997, the government ended fees in primary education for four children in each household, two of whom must be girls (since then it has been extended to all the children of a household). The response was immediate and dramatic: enrollment doubled overnight, by almost 3 million children. Prior to the abolition of school fees, the cost of educating a child for one year at the primary level was equivalent to 20 percent of per capita income, impossible to bear for a financially overstretched poor household.

### **Making Girls' Schooling Affordable: The Impact of Fees**

Fees reinforce and widen inequalities but this like many other factors raised must be examined carefully, because issues such as awareness among parents of relief and wealth of parents are also likely to contribute to the impact of fees. The impact of fees is greatest on the poor. In Côte d'Ivoire, girls from households above the poverty line are twice as likely to be enrolled in primary school as boys from households below the poverty line. In Ghana, enrollments are 20 percentage points higher for non-poor children than for children in extreme poverty.

The children of poor households are more likely to be withdrawn from school, to drop out early, or to fail to enroll altogether. The CHER (2002) studies revealed that the poorest people are typically unaware of exemption schemes, that entitlements are frequently siphoned off in favor of the non-poor, and that the humiliation of applying for exemptions is itself a major deterrent. Ruetieli Anaeli, a single mother of four children interviewed in the Tanzania study, explains, "it was very difficult to get (education) exemption because I had to kneel down before the ten cell leader, village council, teachers, guardians in the family, and everybody I felt would sympathize with my problems . . . it cost me my dignity as a mother."

On the other hand in South Africa, schools are compelled to inform parents of the school fee exemption for poor learners. In 2006, the country undertook to develop a framework which allows disadvantaged schools to receive subsidies if they enrolled non-fee-paying learners, because the number of fee exemptions granted to poor learners at certain schools was becoming a burden on schools' finances. A 2003 *Review on the Resourcing, Financing and Costs of Education in Public Schools* revealed that parents who were unable to pay school fees were treated unfairly and schools came up with all kinds of "hidden expenses" among others. Also, schools did not inform parents of their right to apply for exemption and schools discriminated against learners whose parents had not paid, or were unable to pay school fees.

Eliminating fees however has two key implications: first, it reduces the overall revenue, especially at the service delivery level where most fees are collected and retained. Second, where eliminating fees genuinely lowers the cost for households, it raises demand for education, and increases the number of service users. Unless governments find alternative sources of financing for education, eliminating user fees will have one of two effects. On the one hand, it will reduce expenditure per student, and lower quality, thereby undermining the same goals it set out to achieve. Despite Uganda's success in expanding school enrollments, the quality of education is low; children are frequently taught in

classes of 100, by poorly paid teachers, often in buildings without roofs or sanitation. Many lack the learning materials needed to acquire literacy and numeracy. Although formal fees have been abolished in Uganda, then, parents continue to face charges for building materials, school watchmen, sports, stationery, and uniforms. Where the quality of education is low, and generates low benefits, parents have few incentives to commit scarce resources to their children's schooling, and sixty per cent of primary school students drop out in the first four grades.

Alternatively, eliminating fees may simply informalize fees through indirect costs, with schools unofficially charging households in an attempt to protect their income. For a country to sustain progress towards universal access, it needs not only to eliminate fees, but to mobilize predictable and additional funds, and use these efficiently to raise quality and improve equity. In Tanzania, where free primary education was introduced in January 2002, the government needed 46,000 new classrooms to cope with an additional 3 million children entering the system. Initial estimates were that 1.5 million students, primarily girls, began attending primary school almost immediately. This success increased the urgency of finding external resources for the government of Tanzania.

## The Bottleneck Effect

Financial impediments to access to schooling still remain: households bear a significant amount of the cost of education, even when primary education is free. Parents and local communities contribute to education through sharing in the cost of buildings and their maintenance, transport to schools, food, school uniforms (Malawi made school uniforms optional in 1994), learning materials and extra-curricular activities. At the secondary level, students have to pay school fees in addition. Private schooling has increased significantly in recent years, mostly at the secondary level. At the secondary level students also contribute to school textbook revolving funds like in Malawi.

The most direct and fast-acting way for governments to boost school enrollment is to reduce the direct, indirect, and opportunity costs to parents of educating their daughters (Herz and Sperling 2004) by cutting school fees, providing incentives and scholarships to help cover direct, indirect, and opportunity costs. The cases of Malawi and Ghana demonstrates that the reduction or elimination of school fees led to a dramatic increase in enrollment, especially among girls. This especially demonstrates that in practice, substantial fees have indeed put poorer children and especially girls at a disadvantage, and eliminating fees offers one of the most effective tools to dramatically increase enrollments quickly.

Eliminating user fees however requires major frontend capital investment. These investments have highly significant implications for recurrent costs. In the medium term, expanding access in primary education will raise demand for secondary and tertiary education. It thus follows that governments will need to implement a cluster of policies which create an enabling environment for the expansion of secondary and tertiary education. In line with expansion at the basic level. Among the policy interventions, it would be vital to work progressively to extend free access, especially for the poorest households, in these sub-sectors. Governments are unlikely to be able to achieve a reduction in the gender gap at secondary level if it fails to provide quality primary education and incentives for girls to continue to the lower and upper secondary level.

The international community also bears responsibility, which has been recognized by them in principle, and it has made commitments through a number of global initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Fast-Track Initiative (FTI).

Low-income countries, concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa, are simply unable to finance free universal primary and secondary education access without an immediate leap in the volume and quality of donor support. The UN estimates that \$10–15 billion is needed annually in additional aid to provide every child with free, quality basic education. Donors rightly press developing-country governments to prioritize spending for the social sectors, yet fail to followup with their own commitments to education and health. Aid to basic education stands at about \$1 billion a year, or just 2 percent of total ODA. Overall aid flows fell steadily through the 1990s, to 0.22 percent of rich countries' GDP, less than one-third of the UN commitment of 0.7 percent. Very little of this reaches low-income countries where the need is greatest. Whatever is done to mobilize internal resources at the country level, better quality, as well as more aid, is urgently needed to achieve free primary and secondary education.

## The School Environment

The physical environment of schools has been identified as a source of low performance and absenteeism among girls. For example, lack of privacy due to shared toilet facilities between boys and girls may cause menstruating girls unbearable embarrassment. Also, gender-insensitive teaching methodology has led to lower participation of girls as they may be ignored or discouraged by teachers.

Traditionally, educational systems are likely to stream girls toward/away from certain subjects. This practice is most obvious in the areas of science, technical and vocational education.

### *Science Education*

Generally, more boys than girls take subjects in science and technology in Africa. Looking at secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa between 1996 and 2000, O'Connor (2003) observes that “offered a choice between arts, humanities, and the sciences at the secondary level, fewer girls opt for the sciences, with biology and mathematics being the most popular option and physics being the least popular.”

Tables 4 and 5 give an indication that performance of girls in Sub-Saharan Africa in science and mathematics is also generally below that of boys at the secondary level. Reasons for this state of affairs have been variously documented and led to a number of interventions.<sup>6</sup>

6. UNESCO's Equal Opportunity for Girls and Women in Scientific and Vocational Education; Female Education in Mathematics and Science in Africa (FEMSA) project; The Commonwealth Secretariat Girls and Women in Science and Technology Roadshow; Science Mathematics and Technology Clinic program; Forum for African Women Evaluation's Tanzania mid-term report (after 5 years) is mainly qualitative.

**Table 4. General Performance in Mathematics in Tanzania, 2000**

|               | Grades       |                 |               |               |                |
|---------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
|               | A            | B               | C             | D             | E              |
| <b>Male</b>   | 1 528        | 10 626          | 21 425        | 33 079        | 123 965        |
| %             | 82.11        | 73.37           | 64.13         | 54.91         | 44.32          |
| <b>Female</b> | 333          | 3 857           | 11 984        | 27 168        | 155 715        |
| %             | 17.89        | 26.63           | 35.87         | 45.09         | 55.68          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>1 861</b> | <b>14 4 483</b> | <b>33 409</b> | <b>60 247</b> | <b>279 680</b> |

Source: O'Connor (2003).

Table 6, taken from a study on female participation in science and technology in Ghana (Sutherland-Addy and others 1995), provides specific insights into the above generalizations.

One of the best documented and most widespread interventions aimed at improving the participation of girls in science and mathematics education has been the FEMSA project which at its height operated in 11 Sub-Saharan countries and sought to promote strategies from the national to the local level. Motivational activities to stimulate girls' interest in SMT disciplines, teacher capacity building, developing of instructional materials, supplementary classes, and mobilizing community support were important elements of a cluster of interventions which characterized the project. More than everything, FEMSA sought to promote national plans to implement these strategies.

In addition, the project promoted the popular Science, Mathematics, and Technology Education (STME) clinics for girls. The STME clinic idea was taken up as a national intervention geared at closing the gender gap in female participation in science-based subjects in the school system. Evaluations of the effect of FEMSA and STME appear to be largely qualitative (MOE 2000; O'Connor 2003). The observations made are that the target groups

**Table 5. Subject Enrollment for the Malawi Secondary School Leaving Examination, by Gender**

|                    | Year   |        |        |        |        |
|--------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|                    | 1966   | 1997   | 1998   | 1999   | 2000   |
| <b>Biology</b>     |        |        |        |        |        |
| Boys               | 15 695 | 16 563 | 22 964 | 23 715 | 26 411 |
| Girls              | 7 682  | 8 447  | 12 739 | 13 745 | 15 736 |
| <b>Mathematics</b> |        |        |        |        |        |
| Boys               | 15 303 | 17 051 | 20 960 | 22 830 | 26 026 |
| Girls              | 7 352  | 8 935  | 11 437 | 13 450 | 15 696 |

Source: O'Connor (2003).

**Table 6. Reasons for the Low Participation of Girls in Science, Maths, and Technological Subjects in Ghana**

| Frequency      | Reasons  |
|----------------|--|
| High: Over 20% | –Girls have the mentality that these subjects are difficult and for boys; they therefore shy away from them. 34.4%   |
| Medium: 5–20%  | –They feel lazy to learn; they don't have the kind of brains that boys have; they find it difficult to crack their brains; they are dull. 14.3%  |
|                | –These subjects are difficult for girls; girls are weak in them; they don't understand them. 12.0%   |
|                | –Most girls feel that they cannot pursue any subject involving figures. 10.7%  |
|                | –Negative socialization through restrictions imposed by parents, discouragement from society generally and from both parents and males. 8.0%   |
| Low: Below 5%  | –Girls do not normally pay attention to these subjects. 4.9%   |
|                | –The subjects need constant thinking; they are time-consuming but in the end pay less; they need concentration, determination and hard work, and girls are usually not prepared for this. 3.1% |
|                | –Girls like reading subjects; they are more romantic; imaginative and less practical and tend to take more to subjects like literature which are inclined to their natural interests. 2.7%     |
|                | –They felt that when they finish school they are going to marry, so they don't take their studies seriously. 2.2%  |
|                | –They don't have the confidence to study these subjects. 1.8%  |
|                | –Unlike boys, more work is pushed to girls at home, making it difficult for them to have time for their books. 1.3%  |
|                | –The negative attitude of teachers who offer these subjects; they don't receive the kind of attention required from teachers. 1.3%   |
|                | –Lack of guidance during subjects selection; they don't know the benefits of these subjects. 0.9%  |
|                | –Lack of extra tuition in these subjects. 0.4%   |
|                | –To obtain a good career in science and mathematics-oriented subjects, one must be prepared to stay in school for a long time. 0.4%  |
|                | –Most of these subjects are handled by men, should female teachers teach them, most girls would be motivated. 0.4%   |

Source: Sutherland-Addy and others (1995).

become highly motivated as a result of the intervention and become very interested in scientific subjects. Furthermore, the numbers of women taking sciences in tertiary institutions is climbing up.

### *Technical and Vocational Education*

A 1996 UNEVOC study on the development of technical and vocational education in Africa demonstrates that technical and vocational education continues to reflect streamlining processes which exclude women from many fields such as building construction, power mechanics, metal work and wood work.

Girls are typically enrolled in trades such as fashion, secretaryship, catering, and so forth. Tables 7 and 8 show typical trends in the participation of girls in vocational courses

**Table 7. National Open Apprenticeship Scheme, Edo State, Nigeria**

| Trade                             | Recruitment from Inception to December, 1995 |              |              |
|-----------------------------------|--|--------------|--------------|
|                                   | Male   | Female       | Total        |
| Fashion                           | 995  | 1,206        | 2,201        |
| Secretarial Studies               | 1,105  | 1,055        | 2,160        |
| Hair Dressing                     | —  | 751          | 751          |
| Furniture Making                  | 964  | —            | 964          |
| Auto-Mechanic                     | 656  | —            | 656          |
| Auto-Electrician                  | 695  | —            | 695          |
| Electronics                       | 604  | —            | 604          |
| Refrigerator and Air Conditioning | 605  | —            | 605          |
| Printing                          | 215  | —            | 215          |
| Art and Sign                      | 155  | —            | 155          |
| Panel Beating                     | 125  | —            | 125          |
| Shoe Making                       | 121  | —            | 121          |
| Music                             | 155  | 61           | 216          |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>6,395</b>                                 | <b>3,073</b> | <b>9,468</b> |

Source: UNEVOC/BREDA (1996).

**Table 8. Manzini Industrial Training Center Enrollment, 1990/91, Swaziland**

| Course                           | Trainee    |           |
|----------------------------------|------------|-----------|
|                                  | Male       | Female    |
| Agriculture                      | 9          | 7         |
| Building                         | 28         | 0         |
| Carpentry                        | 21         | 0         |
| Electrical Repairs               | 10         | 0         |
| Metal Work                       | 20         | 0         |
| Motor mechanics                  | 21         | 1         |
| Panel Beating/Spray Painting     | 9          | 0         |
| Plumbing                         | 6          | 0         |
| Printing                         | 4          | 5         |
| Sewing                           | 0          | 28        |
| Upholstery                       | 5          | 3         |
| Upgrading Trainees to Trade Test | 133        | 44        |
| Grade II level                   | 14         | 0         |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>147</b> | <b>44</b> |

Source: UNEVOC/BREDA (1996).

in Edo State Nigeria and the Manzini Industrial Training Centre, Swaziland, respectively which could be due to choice by students induced by societal expectations and/or through gender streaming. Tables 9 and 10 show participation and performance in technical and vocational subjects in Burkina Faso in 1992 based on data from the Ministry of Secondary, High, and Scientific Research. This data show that girls have either not registered for courses such as electronics and machine shop at all and also that the one girl who took electronics failed to pass part 2 of the examination. Despite the dated nature of the data, there does not appear to be significant changes in the current situation given the urgent calls for measures to increase the participation of girls in technical and vocational education.

## Sociocultural Barriers

Investing in women's education is being increasingly understood as a way of rapidly enhancing the development of African communities which are in turn being acknowledged as the fulcrum for sustainable development. The following extract sums up this idea<sup>7</sup>:

The education of women is thought to be one of the most "important elements in the development process" (Prah 2002; UNICEF 1993; Floro and Wolff 1990). Despite the evidence concerning the private and social returns of female education which some have called the "strategic investment"—the evidence has not been enough to shift the development paradigm within major donor circles. Gender equity and women's empowerment remain as additions or at best "mainstreamed" as opposed to being key policy thrusts within poverty reduction programming, and educational policy formulation. Despite the global empirical evidence suggesting that women's education is crucial in order to ensure that a country's development aspirations are achieved, the goals of gender equity are often not achieved and sustained across the education system (UNESCO 2002).

One cluster of reasons for this state of affairs is the entrenched attitudes towards girls and women which may be traced to the "dual inheritance of patriarchy"<sup>8</sup> from both the indigenous African cultures and the colonial experience. The majority of African girls and women living in rural Africa do indeed demonstrate a remarkable resilience to the challenging conditions in which they live taking their strength partly from values and indigenous knowledge.

7. This is the basis of the focus on girls' education at the global level as expressed in the Millennium Development Goals for example. We quote L. Casely Hayford in her "Situational Analysis Girls Education" prepared in 2002 for the Ghanaian Ministry of Education Sector Review.

8. As Casely-Hayford (2002) notes, in many African countries: "(s)everal researchers in Ghana have identified the traditional sociocultural perceptions of girls as one of the key impediments to their education. Studies as far back as the sixties by Oppong (1971), and Blakemore (1976) and more recently studies by Wolf/Odonkor 1998; and Casely-Hayford 2000 attest to the sociocultural perceptions of girls as first a wife and then a mother. Most of the studies in the Northern Region suggest that girls are reared to "serve" the husband and the girl's performance in the home reflects on the families training and honour; once married she becomes the property of the husband's family. Educational investment decisions therefore lean towards the boys since he is expected to be the key family breadwinner. Despite these persistent societal perceptions, research suggests that women are often the sole breadwinners of the family supporting the educational and health needs of the children (Korboe 1998; Svanikier 1997)."

**Table 9. Final Baccalauréate (Senior High School) Results in TVE in Burkina Faso (1992)**

|                   | F1<br>Machine Shop |                   |                 | F2<br>Electronics |                   |                 | F3<br>Electrical Work |                   |                 |    |   |    |    |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----|---|----|----|
|                   | Public<br>School   | Private<br>School | Conti.<br>Educ. | Public<br>School  | Private<br>School | Conti.<br>Educ. | Public<br>School      | Private<br>School | Conti.<br>Educ. |    |   |    |    |
|                   | Total              | Total             | Total           | Total             | Total             | Total           | Total                 | Total             | Total           |    |   |    |    |
| Enrolled          | Boys               | 23                | 0               | 9                 | 32                | 11              | 0                     | 2                 | 13              | 31 | 0 | 17 | 48 |
|                   | Girls              | 0                 | 0               | 0                 | 0                 | 0               | 0                     | 0                 | 0               | 0  | 0 | 0  | 1  |
|                   | Total              | 23                | 0               | 9                 | 32                | 11              | 0                     | 2                 | 13              | 32 | 0 | 17 | 49 |
| No. of Candidates | Boys               | 23                | 0               | 8                 | 31                | 11              | 0                     | 1                 | 12              | 31 | 0 | 13 | 44 |
|                   | Girls              | 0                 | 0               | 0                 | 0                 | 0               | 0                     | 0                 | 0               | 0  | 0 | 0  | 1  |
|                   | Total              | 23                | 0               | 8                 | 31                | 11              | 0                     | 1                 | 12              | 32 | 0 | 13 | 45 |
| Pass Part 1       | Boys               | 3                 | 0               | 0                 | 3                 | 7               | 0                     | 0                 | 7               | 10 | 0 | 1  | 11 |
|                   | Girls              | 0                 | 0               | 0                 | 0                 | 0               | 0                     | 0                 | 0               | 0  | 0 | 0  | 0  |
|                   | Total              | 3                 | 0               | 0                 | 3                 | 7               | 0                     | 0                 | 7               | 10 | 0 | 1  | 11 |
| Pass Part 2       | Boys               | 4                 | 0               | 2                 | 6                 | 2               | 0                     | 0                 | 2               | 6  | 0 | 1  | 7  |
|                   | Girls              | 0                 | 0               | 0                 | 0                 | 0               | 0                     | 0                 | 0               | 1  | 0 | 0  | 1  |
|                   | Total              | 4                 | 0               | 2                 | 6                 | 2               | 0                     | 0                 | 2               | 7  | 0 | 1  | 8  |
| Total Pass        | Boys               | 7                 | 0               | 2                 | 9                 | 9               | 0                     | 0                 | 9               | 16 | 0 | 2  | 18 |
|                   | Girls              | 0                 | 0               | 0                 | 0                 | 0               | 0                     | 0                 | 0               | 1  | 0 | 0  | 1  |
|                   | Total              | 7                 | 0               | 2                 | 9                 | 9               | 0                     | 0                 | 9               | 17 | 0 | 2  | 19 |

Source: UNEVOC/BREDA (1996).



**Table 10. Details of Performance by Subject Area—High School Results in TVE in Burkina Faso (1992)**

|                   | E. Technology Education |                |              |       |               |                | G1. Secretarial Studies |       |               | G2. Management & Accounting |              |       |      |
|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------|--------------|-------|---------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-------|------|
|                   | Public School           | Private School | Conti. Educ. | Total | Public School | Private School | Conti. Educ.            | Total | Public School | Private School              | Conti. Educ. | Total |      |
|                   | Enrolled                | Boys           | 38           | 0     | 2             | 40             | 0                       | 1     | 9             | 10                          | 60           | 353   | 354  |
|                   | Girls                   | 1              | 0            | 1     | 2             | 28             | 119                     | 54    | 210           | 50                          | 205          | 152   | 407  |
|                   | Total                   | 39             | 0            | 3     | 42            | 28             | 120                     | 63    | 211           | 110                         | 558          | 506   | 1174 |
| No. of Candidates | Boys                    | 38             | 0            | 2     | 40            | 0              | 1                       | 8     | 9             | 60                          | 351          | 277   | 688  |
|                   | Girls                   | 1              | 0            | 1     | 2             | 28             | 118                     | 36    | 182           | 49                          | 202          | 103   | 354  |
|                   | Total                   | 39             | 0            | 3     | 42            | 28             | 119                     | 44    | 191           | 109                         | 553          | 380   | 1042 |
| Pass Part 1       | Boys                    | 20             | 0            | 0     | 20            | 2              | 0                       | 1     | 1             | 44                          | 103          | 45    | 192  |
|                   | Girls                   | 1              | 0            | 1     | 2             | 0              | 17                      | 3     | 20            | 20                          | 39           | 9     | 68   |
|                   | Total                   | 21             | 0            | 1     | 22            | 2              | 17                      | 4     | 23            | 64                          | 142          | 54    | 260  |
| Pass Part 2       | Boys                    | 8              | 0            | 2     | 10            | 0              | 0                       | 2     | 2             | 9                           | 65           | 39    | 113  |
|                   | Girls                   | 0              | 0            | 0     | 0             | 12             | 39                      | 9     | 60            | 8                           | 33           | 10    | 51   |
|                   | Total                   | 8              | 0            | 2     | 10            | 12             | 39                      | 11    | 62            | 17                          | 98           | 49    | 164  |
| Total Pass        | Boys                    | 28             | 0            | 2     | 30            | 0              | 0                       | 3     | 3             | 53                          | 168          | 84    | 305  |
|                   | Girls                   | 1              | 0            | 1     | 2             | 14             | 36                      | 12    | 62            | 28                          | 72           | 19    | 119  |
|                   | Total                   | 29             | 0            | 3     | 32            | 14             | 36                      | 15    | 65            | 81                          | 240          | 103   | 424  |

Source: UNEVOC/BREDA (1996).

These are countered by traditions which place a premium on the reproductive and domestic roles of girls and women. The prepubescent and adolescent girl feels this burden very strongly as she is taken to be at the right age to either be assisting her mother or female relatives in playing their domestic roles making her own transition into the adult role of wife, mother, or producer of food and other economic goods and services. From that age, in many parts of Africa even girls who remain in school at the end of the six-year primary cycle, run the risk along their academic career of having to drop out of the pipeline. For example, to prepare for marriage, girls from the Upper West Region of Ghana flock down South to work as porters in markets to contribute to their own trousseau. Girls in the Northern Region are pulled out of school to be married off. In some patrilineal societies, a girl is treated as belonging to her husband's family and is therefore very unlikely to benefit from any care from her father. Her chances for being looked after to enable her to complete her education are lost. Thus girls have less incentive to persist through secondary education because of the gender roles associated with them are not deemed to require high level skills or academic background. Other well-known factors such as the dependence of the family and particularly the mother on the labor of the girl in poor families as well as the tendency for girls to be used as domestic servants in middle and upper class families may be cited as obstacles based on social practices.

Again, girls may be late starters if schools are too far away from communities. As late starters, girls are therefore less likely to complete primary level before they leave to work or marry. Research in lowland Eritrea showed that boys and girls often started school at eight or nine years old because of dangers on the long trip to school. However, girls were taken out of school at ten or eleven because they were considered to be of marriageable age and had to be secluded from men and boys and taught the domestic skills they would soon need to contribute to their new households (Kane 2004). Fear of possible impregnation is a commonly cited reason for withdrawal of girls the end of the primary cycle.

On the other hand, pregnancy is also given as one of the primary reasons for dropout. Studies in Ghana between 1997 and 2002 indicated that the reason given for 70 percent of Junior Secondary School drop out was pregnancy. The pregnant girl is stigmatized and rusticated from school. Some of the reasons given include discouraging other girls from engaging in immoral behavior. A boy found to have impregnated a girl is never sent away from school permanently.

Another category of obstacles comes from perceptions built around a girl's academic abilities. Many girls do not continue their schooling on the one hand or do not take science subjects on the other because they have imbibed the notion that they are not intelligent enough to do so. It is also found that at the secondary level girls perform at a lower rate than boys (Sutherland-Addy and others 1995; Dorsey, 1996). Reasons given for this state of affairs include the disparaging attitude towards brilliance in girls causing them to practice a form of autocensorship and lower their academic horizons in order not to stand out. The implications are that in a competitive atmosphere where secondary school places are few, low performance creates a small pool of girls who can be admitted into secondary system.

## Violence against Girls

Multiple forms of fear of violence and harassment are silent and unspoken barriers that prevent adolescent girls from attending schools. Violence against girls results in low enrollment and attendance of girls in schools, high dropout rates, poor performance at school, unwanted teenage pregnancy, early marriage, increased rates of HIV/AIDS in the 15- to 24-year-old age group, fear of victimization, loss of self-esteem, depression, anger, demoralization, poor performance, and other psychological trauma, including risk of suicide. Poor quality of teaching and low levels of teacher professionalism can also be indicative of the presence of violence and abuse.

Much of the violence goes unreported and the scale of the problem is largely underestimated, mainly because violence is used as a tool to impose male dominance, and girls feel powerless to rebuke or complain (Action Aid 2004; Human Rights Watch 2001).

**Table 11. Factors Affecting Disparities in Secondary Education**

| Demand Side   | Supply Side  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Social and cultural factors which:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– affect the behavior and the choices of parents and pupils</li> <li>– girls' education seen as incompatible with religious and/or traditional values</li> <li>– boys' education favored over girls' education</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Economic factors such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Poverty</li> <li>– Direct and Indirect Costs (school fees, uniforms, textbooks, transport, etc.)</li> <li>– Opportunity Costs v/s lower rate of return (girls are needed for household or labor tasks)</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Familial factors such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Parents' low level of literacy and education hence low perception of the importance of girls' education</li> <li>– Early marriages and pregnancies</li> <li>– Orphans</li> <li>– Girl headed households</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Other factors:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– HIV and Aids</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Political Factors such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– policy priorities which focus on primary basis education and put emphasis on access and enrollment v/s retention and completion</li> <li>– Budget constraints and Structural adjustment programs with negative impact on the education sector and lack of incentives for girls' access to primary and secondary education</li> <li>– Political instability</li> <li>– Inconsistent educational policies</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Bureaucratic factors: formal commitments to gender objectives become weaker as they travel down the bureaucratic chain</li> <li>■ Institutional factors:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– school may not be gender sensitive with lack of gender awareness among teachers</li> <li>– lack of female teachers</li> <li>– safety issues (long distances to school; gender-based violence including sexual violence and corporal punishment)</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Infrastructural factors:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– long distances to schools</li> <li>– remote areas with no schools</li> <li>– lack of sex-segregated sanitary facilities</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Contextual factors:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– poor quality of education programs</li> <li>– non contextualized education systems to local learning needs</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |



Gender violence in schools is a worldwide phenomenon, but some of the most dramatic current research comes from Sub-Saharan Africa, where it is becoming a serious concern. In urban Zimbabwe, half of all reported rape cases involved girls under the age of fifteen (World Bank 2002). Among the causes cited by Zimbabwean girls were older men allowed access to school grounds, school boys forcing girls to have sex, being followed to school by men and teachers touching girls' breasts (Leach and Machakanja 2001; Kane 2004). Gender violence is still more common at the upper primary, lower secondary, and secondary levels. Research in Zimbabwe on 112 girls at these three levels of the education system shows a peer group culture in which older men and boys prey on young girls, luring them into engaging in sexual activity with money, status symbols, and promises of marriage. However, sexual abuse of younger girls is becoming increasingly common. One of the factors associated with and contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS is the belief that sex with a virgin is a cure (Kane 2004).

## The Unreached

Diversity characterizes the girls missing school: girls who will not access conventional secondary schools because of distance and mobility (nomadic populations, rural areas dwellers); girls living in low population density areas; girls living in extreme poverty and who cannot afford not to work. Targeted strategies to provide them with relevant and contextualized education and training that will rapidly pull them as well as their family out of poverty need to be put in place. Alternative modes of service delivery which are highly flexible and which create opportunities to join mainstream schooling should be provided.

## Summary of Factors

Table 11 provides a summary of the factors affecting disparities, divided into demand-side and supply-side.

# Promotion of Female Participation in Secondary Education

---

In this chapter, we examine a range of actors in the field of girls' education in Africa and the actions which they have taken towards the promotion of female participation in secondary education. A selection of state actors and multilateral and bilateral donors was made, because there is indeed a wide range of interventions being attempted in the field. There is a growing understanding that a multifocal and flexible approach involving a range of partners may be the best approach, and we therefore end on an extensive presentation of the FAWE Centres of Excellence model which shows several elements of such an approach.

To begin with, some of the obstacles raised in the previous chapter which have been restated as objectives in the Guidelines for Preparing Gender Responsive EFA plans put together by UNESCO's Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau of Education. The summary shown in Table 12 seems to be a particularly pertinent starting point as it reflects work in progress by policymaking entities such as governments, as well as multilateral organizations, non-governmental organization, communities, and institutions.

## Two Policy Challenges

Two challenges namely pregnancy and inaccessibility due to distance discussed in the previous chapter will now be reviewed from a policy perspective to show how the question is being addressed.

### *Re-entry Policies*

Pregnancy has been cited as a major cause of dropout amongst adolescent girls in upper primary and secondary levels across the region. In the past in the majority of countries,



**Table 12. A Summary of Obstacles and Possible Strategies for Overcoming Them**

| Objective  | Strategies   |
|--|--|
| Closing Gender gaps in primary and secondary education                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provision of subsidies/Incentives</li> <li>■ Providing transport and/or boarding facilities</li> <li>■ Providing single-sex learning environments</li> </ul>  |
| Reducing the dropout rate of girls by x%                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Improving the quality of the learning environment and the relevance of the education provided</li> <li>■ Improving relations between school and home and convincing parents to keep girls in school to at least the end of the primary cycle</li> <li>■ Adjusting learning programs to be friendly to learners of both sexes.</li> </ul>  |
| Increasing girls' pass rate from primary to junior secondary education by y% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Improving access to, and quality of secondary schools</li> <li>■ Providing female teachers as role models, ensuring that learning contents and teaching methods are fair and facilitating learning of both sexes, influencing changes in social and cultural practices such as child marriage</li> <li>■ Lobby for legal changes which will keep girls in school after pregnancy</li> </ul> |
| Closing learning achievements gaps by year xxxx                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Training of teachers in gender responsiveness</li> <li>■ Change of teaching-learning practices with emphasis on inclusiveness</li> <li>■ Child centered learning, and team work</li> </ul>  |
| Increasing the number of girls in science and math streams by year yyyy      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Providing girls with positive role models, and relating science and math contents and teaching methods to the everyday lives of both boys and girls</li> <li>■ Demystifying myths, such as women scientists cannot find husbands</li> </ul>   |

Source: UNESCO's Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau of Education, "Guidelines for Preparing Gender Responsive EFA Plans."

girls found to be pregnant faced permanent expulsion from school. Several of the countries have introduced policies of readmission that allow teenage mothers to complete school. In Botswana, Zambia, and Malawi for example, pregnancy policy has been reviewed to allow girls to go back to school after delivery. In an effort to keep older girls and young women in school, the government no longer expels pregnant students, and guarantees a classroom seat for returning mothers. Malawi is one of the few countries in Africa where girls are readmitted to school after giving birth, and where the father of the child, if attending school, is required to withdraw at the same time (Kane 2004). However, cultural norms may still prevent these girls from attending school.

However, there is evidence that where this policy has been implemented, it has been more of a reactive than a preventive strategy. It is not well known to what extent girls are

taking advantage of this policy initiative and return to school after giving birth. An assessment of the new pregnancy policy revealed that the policy was not adequate in dealing with the problem of teenage pregnancy.

In the case of Malawi, it was not widely publicized and also failed to meet the needs of teenage mothers, including counseling and sex education needs (Kane 2004).

### *Reducing Distance*

Research in Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, and Ghana suggests that distance has a negative effect on school enrollment for girls, particularly at the secondary level (Tansel 1997 as quoted in Kane 2004). In some cases, the combination of distance, fears for girls' safety and girls' workloads gave girls little if any opportunity to attend school. A survey of rural areas of Zambia showed that grueling distances to school caused parents to defer schooling for both sexes, but that girls were then often taken out of school at puberty. According to another study in Eritrea, girls were not only sent later to distant schools, but were taken out of school soon afterwards to marry at age 10 or 11 (World Bank 1995; Kane 1996). Older girls may be subject to harassment. Even when the trip is safe, the direct costs may be high and the time lost traveling more costly to girls' work than to that of boys.

Lack of day secondary schools is a major obstacle to girls' access to secondary school, especially in the absence of boarding schools. In its edition of November 3, 2006, the Nigerian newspaper the *Daily Trust* reported that the Katsina State government's policy of abolishing all rural girls boarding secondary schools and their conversion to day schools, had prompted many school-aged girls to abandon their quest for "western education" in many rural communities across the state. The decision was necessitated by their inability to withstand the hard and long trekking distances to where government secondary schools were located and some parents who could not afford to buy them bicycles to ride to the schools had decided to stop their wards from going to school. The article stated that according to the village head of Gamzako in Kafur local government area of the state, a number of those girls had resorted to street hawking while some others got married at an early age. He said pupils of Gamzako Primary School in neighboring communities of Barakai, Bayala, Nassarawa, Badama, and Mallamawa could only secure admission at Government Day Secondary School, Dankanjiba, a distance of over eight kilometers. The village head said students crossed three major rivers and streams before reaching the school daily, and disclosed that even those who go to school usually miss early morning lessons due to the distance and hard trek and the hazard of crossing the rivers.

The state government's policy of de-boarding some girls' secondary schools and the abolishing of rural boarding schools in 2004 has drawn sharp criticism from Ulama and other stakeholders on the grounds of moral training and harsh economic realities which can prevent many parents from sending their children to distant schools. Yet, the then commissioner of Education, Dr Mustapha Inuwa, consistently defended the policy, saying the move became necessary due to massive enrollment of girls and the inadequacy of resources, as well as the overstretching of facilities which he said made it impossible for government to accommodate all the girls at boarding level. However, he revealed that local governments were directed to encourage community participation in opening up day secondary schools, a call yet to be heeded by the communities.

## State Policy and the Promotion of Female Participation in Secondary Education

Over the past 20 years during which educational reforms have been undertaken by African governments, policy has been used as a powerful motor to drive change. We provide below a brief on selected policy initiatives geared towards improving secondary education in three countries in which achieving gender parity has been made an integral part of national educational policy, in some cases before the EFA declaration in 1990.

### Ghana

Ghana by 1987, was implementing an educational reform policy which included gender parity as one of its goals for equity. Under the reform program, textbooks were made gender sensitive, and curricula at Junior Secondary Schools made gender inclusive to avoid traditional gender streaming.

In further fulfillment of the Government of Ghana's commitment to achieving gender parity by 2005 and gender equity by 2015, the Girls' Education Unit (GEU) was established in 1997 followed by the creation of the high level post of Minister of Primary, Secondary and Girl-Child Education in 2001. The GEU was mandated to increase the

**Table 13. A National Vision for Girls' Education in Ghana: Gender Targets Set by the Girls' Education Unit, 2001**

|   | Goals   | Status in Achieving Goals   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Increase national enrollment of girls in Primary schools to equal that of boys  | The gender gap has been closing at the Primary level but the drop out rates and poor transition rates of girls at upper Primary and JSS persists.   |
| 2 | Develop and maintain strategies aimed at ensuring the continuation of girls into Junior Secondary School  | The GEU is exploring ways of achieving this target through increasing the counselling services, reducing the distance to school and providing water and sanitation facilities at Primary and JSS level. |
| 3 | Reduce the drop out rate for girls in Primary from 30 to 20%  | PLA activities/Sensitisation of Schools. Similar strategies are being used to reduce drop out.  |
| 4 | Reduce drop out rate in Junior Secondary School from 21 to 15%  | Sponsorship programs, STME Clinics and community awareness creation programs.   |
| 5 | Increase the transition rate of girls from Junior to Senior Secondary School by 10%   | Sponsorship for girls is proving to be an effective approach for increasing transition. Guidance and counselling for girls.   |
| 6 | Increase participation of girls in Science, Technology and Mathematics (STM) Subjects by improving the quality of teaching and enhancing the perception of these subjects (GES, 1999) | STME clinics are helping girls pursue science related subjects (200 students in each STME clinic per district).   |

Source: "Situational Analysis of Gender Issues Education" prepared for the Ghanaian Ministry of Education (2002).

enrollment, retention, and achievement of girls in school and their participation in science, mathematics, and technological subjects. Girls' Education Units are established in all of Ghana's 138 district directorates of education. They have been the fulcrum of coordination decentralized activities aimed at improving the education of girls all over the country.

Yet, in spite of constitutional assurances and the establishment of the GEU, only modest improvements in overall rates of achievements have been accomplished in girls' education; girls still lag behind boys in education. National Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) of girls at primary and JSS levels has increased from 71.4 percent and 51.6 percent respectively in 1997/98 to 72.5 percent and 59.3 percent in 2002/03; exhibiting growths of 1.1 percent and 7.7 percent at the Primary and JSS levels respectively within the period.

Girls' transition rate from P6 to JSS1 in 1997/98 academic year was 91.1 percent and increased to 91.6 percent in 2002/03 academic year, exhibiting a growth of 0.5 percent within the five-year period.

Percentage girls' enrollment in 1996/97 academic year at primary and JSS levels were 46.3 percent and 43.7 percent respectively. These increased to 47.4 and 45.3 percent respectively during the 2002/03 academic year showing growths of 1.1 percent and 1.6 percent respectively for the two levels. Table 14 puts the trends into perspective.

Discrete data on strategies being implemented to raise the level of participation of girls in secondary education in Ghana is difficult to find. However, Tables 15 and 16 give a good idea of the major players in girls' education and the kinds of activities which are being undertaken from the national to the institutional level.

### *Malawi*

In Malawi, the introduction of free primary education in 1994 created an increased demand for the provision of secondary education. The gender gap remains significant at secondary level with an enrollment rate of 15 percent for girls for a gross enrollment ratio of 17 percent, as compared to an average of 34.6 percent and 43.1 percent respectively for the African region. This represents some of the lowest enrollment ratios in Africa. Moreover, the gains of increased primary school access have been somewhat diminished by the fact that a significant number of those enrolled in primary education repeat or drop out of the system. It is estimated that out of every 100 children entering primary school, only 46 complete Standard 8. Overall repetition at the primary level is 25 percent, making the attainment of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of universal primary completion difficult.

Malawi finds itself confronted to three interrelated major gender issues:

- providing adequate *access* to schooling,
- addressing *equity* in terms of access, and
- ensuring *quality* of the education system.

To address the gender equity issue and close the enrollment gender gap in secondary schools, Malawi had made secondary education free for girls. At the secondary level, the average dropout rate is 12 percent every year. The dropout rate among girls is 16 percent and among boys 10 percent, indicating a significantly higher number of girls drop out at secondary level, undermining the MDG of eliminating gender disparity in secondary education.

**Table 14. Female Participation Rates at Various Level of Education: 1998/90–2000/01**

| Level                           | 1989/90 | 1990/91 | 1991/92 | 1992/93 | 1993/94 | 1994/95 | 1995/96 | 1996/97 | 1997/98 | 1998/99 | 1999/00 | 2000/01 |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Primary                         | 44.86   | 44.99   | 45.46   | 45.69   | 45.9    | 46.1    | 46.2    | 46.3    | 46.7    | 46.7    | 46.9    | 47.2    |
| JSS/Middle                      | 41.31   | 40.79   | 41.12   | 41.85   | 42.2    | 42.8    | 43.2    | 43.7    | 44.1    | 44.7    | 44.9    | 45.3    |
| SSS                             | 33.01   | 32.96   | 33.09   | 33.48   | 34.5    | 35.4    | 37.1    | 38.7    | 38.7    | 38.7    | 40.7    | 43.5    |
| Teacher Training                | 42.38   | 43.93   | 33.80   | 32.9    | —       | —       | —       | —       | 38.4    | 39.2    | 39.0    | —       |
| All Polytechnics<br>(Full Time) | 21.90   | 23.2    | 26.7    | 18.9    | —       | —       | —       | 20.93   | 20.51   | 21.21   | 20.81   | 22.1    |
| Ghana Institute<br>of Languages | —       | —       | —       | —       | —       | —       | —       | —       | —       | 75.1    | 66.9    | 60.8    |
| University of Ghana             | 19.80   | 23.1    | 23.6    | 24.2    | 25.7    | —       | —       | 31.10   | 25.83   | 29.71   | 31.53   | 38.0    |
| K.N.U.S.T                       | 16.5    | 17.7    | 17.6    | 17.6    | 18.2    | —       | —       | 21.19   | 20.07   | 20.18   | 21.18   | 21.2    |
| University of Capecoast         | 19.6    | 21.5    | 22.8    | 24.4    | 25.2    | —       | —       | 26.1    | 26.47   | 26.15   | 25.36   | 26.1    |
| U.C.E.W                         | —       | —       | —       | 24.2    | 25.7    | —       | —       | 24.77   | 26.93   | 31.49   | 31.17   | 33.2    |
| University of Dev't. Studies    | —       | —       | —       | —       | —       | —       | —       | 12.94   | 13.54   | 14.34   | 14.54   | 15.0    |

Source: Sutherland-Addy (2002).



**Table 15. MOE/GEU Interventions in Girls' Education**

| Key Activity   | Scope              | Agency Partnership |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Policy, Research, and Advocacy</b>  |                    |                    |
| Symposium with key stakeholders in Girls Education   | National           | WUSC/UNICEF        |
| Conducted several pieces of research on girls education, scholarships and teacher education  | National           | World Bank         |
| Training of District Directors of Education on Gender and Equity   | Selected Districts | WSD                |
| Strategic Plan for Girls Education   |                    | WUSC/SAGE/GEU      |
| Newsletter "Gender Matters"  | Nationwide         | GEU/UNICEF         |
| <b>Gender Sensitising the Curriculum</b>   |                    |                    |
| Revised the Basic Education Curriculum to become more gender sensitive. New gender sensitive syllabi in the final stage of production.         | National           | WUSC/CRDD          |
| Developed Handbook for ensuring gender sensitisation in the curriculum   | National           | WUSC               |
| Developed Resource book on improving Quality of Teaching and Learning  | National           | WUSC               |
| <b>District Level Programs</b>   |                    |                    |
| Training of District Girls Education Officers and STME Co-ordinators in all the Districts on PRA skills and community sensitisation techniques | All districts      | UNICEF/WSD         |
| Developed Girls Education Hand book for training   | All Districts      | SAGE               |
| Pilot PRA programs in several communities  | All Districts      | WUSC               |
| SAGE Pilot program   | National           | SAGE               |
| Female Scholarship programs  | Nationwide         | Districts          |
| Girls Education Week Celebrations  | Nationwide         | GEU/WSD            |
| Food Provision for Girls and Families  | Northern Regions   | WFP                |

Ministry of Education school surveys report that the main reason for dropping out of school for both boys and girls is lack of interest, largely attributed to the poor learning conditions at schools. However, family responsibilities, early marriage, and pregnancy are additional reasons for the higher proportion of girls dropping out of school compared to boys. Some policies instituted by the government to improve retention of girls in the schools include allowing girls to resume school after pregnancies and bursary programs that favor girls. Government efforts to increase access of girls to secondary education include admission policies that give preferences to girls, but hostel capacities at boarding schools is a limiting factor. At the day secondary schools, 50 percent of school spaces are reserved for girls, but at government boarding schools, where there are more hostels for boys than for girls, the number of girls admitted is less than 50 percent. In 2004, about 43 percent of the students admitted to the first year of secondary education (Form I) were girls even though girls made up only 39 percent of the students passing the Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLC) examination taken at the end of the primary cycle, thus indicating the positive impact of the policy on girls' education.

**Table 16. Gender Activities by Development Partners**

| Program                     | Educational Level     | Mainstreaming Gender Activities  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| UNICEF/Child Scope Programs | Basic                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Focuses on the Afram Plains, Bulsa in the Northern Region. The program attempts to improve the community school relationship, which mobilises people to plan actions to improve the school.</li> <li>– Child scope focuses on assisting communities undertake participatory planning exercises in order to improve their schools.</li> <li>– Interventions are also made in areas of school health education and child to child.</li> </ul> |
| QUIPS (USAID) Programs      | Basic                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– All PTA/SMC training includes a special emphasis on gender and girls education.</li> <li>– Support to the GEU through the SAGE program, which is piloting training modules with girls' education officers in some districts in Central and Western regions.</li> </ul>  |
| WSD Programs                | Primary               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Budgetary support to Girls' Education Officers at the district level to pursue regular activities (girls education awareness activities, PLA/PRA, etc.).</li> <li>– Supported gender training for district and regional officers.</li> </ul>  |
| World Food Program          | Primary and JSS       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provision of food ration for girls attending Primary or JSS in the 3 Northern Regions.</li> <li>– Girls in deprived rural schools at Primary and JSS are supplied with a dry ration at the end of the month if they achieve 85% attendance.</li> <li>– This has increased the participation of girls in many schools in the areas.</li> </ul>   |
| Catholic Relief Services    | Primary and JSS       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provision of daily food ration for children attending school on a regular basis.</li> </ul>   |
| FAWE                        | Basic/Secondary Level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– District awareness creation activities which mobilise key stakeholders.</li> <li>– Funding for small community initiatives such as school libraries and income generating activities, which improve the girls' educational environment; establishment of Secondary school; formation of Junior Clubs.</li> </ul>  |

In terms of equity, although a number of measures have been taken to improve girls' and women's participation in Malawi's educational institutions and equal numbers of girls and boys start school, gender parity at the upper levels of the education system has yet to be achieved. Girls are particularly underrepresented at the secondary levels. Malawian girls are also relatively underrepresented in vocational training institutions and are more prone to repetition and dropout. Females also form the majority of the country's illiterates. In addition, there are inequalities of access across socioeconomic groups and regions as well as between rural and urban areas.



The Malawi case also illustrates the importance of advance planning and resources to support fee reductions: elimination of school fees by itself jeopardizes the long term effectiveness of the education system and investment in girls' education, unless it is part of a broader education reform.

### *Uganda*

Expanding access to secondary schools where fees are still charged is particularly difficult and challenging for most Sub-Saharan African countries. However, some countries are taking up the challenge of providing incentives for girls' secondary education, combined with strong government advocacy for girls' education. In September 2006, The government of Uganda approved the Universal Post-Primary Education and Training (UPPET) policy document aimed at enhancing the sustainability of Universal Primary Education (UPE) and reducing the cost of post-primary education on households. The scholarship based on a predetermined aggregated score will allow about 430,000 pupils to join any of the 844 government-aided schools. Yet, students will repeat classes at their own cost, clearly a deterrent to repetition. The UPPET is to cover non-boarding expenses for students enrolling in the schools. In 2005, only about 50 percent of the pupils who completed primary schooling accessed post-primary. The government of Uganda is also to provide bursaries to students who enroll in senior one in selected private schools in the 271 sub-counties that do not have any government secondary school. Parents are expected to provide lunch, uniforms, stationary, and medical care while government provides basic instructional materials and basic equipment. The Government plans to introduce Universal Secondary Education in 2007. In areas where the numbers are very high, the ministry of education has proposed double shifts.

When free schooling was introduced in 1997, primary school enrollment immediately almost doubled from 3.4 to 5.7 million children, and rose to 6.5 million by 1999. Total girls' enrollments went from 63 percent to 83 percent, while enrollment among the poorest fifth of girls went from 46 percent to 82 percent. The elimination of fees was part of a broader education reform, so it may not be responsible for all of the enrollment increase. Enrollments rose for both girls and boys, though the gender gap worsened in some areas. Statistics indicate that about 60 percent of pupils are dropping out of primary school for several reasons, including lack of parental support. To redress this situation, the government has approved the Education Bill 2006 which introduces a legislation to compel all school age children to attend and stay in school until they acquire a primary leaving certificate. Parents whose children drop out of school before completing primary seven would risk prosecution. How this will translate in practice remains to be seen. Will parents who cannot afford to send their children to school be criminalized? Or will school managers who impose indirect schools fees be prosecuted? Interestingly, however, the Uganda educational reform reveals an ongoing process, with policies and initiatives meant to correct poor outcomes.



# Institutions Addressing the Issue of Secondary Education

---

**M**uch of the attention related to the international education goals has focused on improving the coverage and quality of primary education. While many international observers have noted that this has been partly at the expense of expanding education at the secondary level, secondary enrollment in many developing countries has grown despite this. However, the two are so closely related that the lack of opportunities at the secondary level will inevitably create difficulties for the achievement of universal primary education.

Governments seeking to implement a policy based on education as a right, would incur a financial burden which could not be borne by already overstretched education budgets. “What this suggests is that, until [African economies] can support such a responsibility they will still need the support of NGOs and private providers to augment government’s effort” (Djangmah 2006).

As shown in the introduction to this paper, the Education for All (EFA) goals do encompass secondary education as part of a broad range of education goals. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) refer to gender parity in primary and secondary education as a key development target. Many development agencies, NGOs and countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have embarked on various initiatives to achieve gender parity in secondary education and progress towards gender equity.

Significant agencies involved in girls’ secondary education on the continent are USAID, FAWE, CAMFED, and UNICEF.

## CAMFED

The costs of secondary education are far higher than those at primary level. The majority of girls in Sub-Saharan Africa never enroll at secondary school. CAMFED programs enable girls who lack the means to attend secondary school until completion. CAMFED provides:



- School clothing, shoes, stationery, books, school and examination fees;
- Social support, including counselling and mentoring;
- Safe term-time accommodation for girls who live too far from school to walk daily;
- Sanitary protection to enable girls to attend school regularly and confidently; and
- Health information including information on HIV/AIDS.

This combination of material and social support enables girls to enroll at school and retain their hold on education; where girls are experiencing difficulties, help and advice is available in the community. Another key feature of CAMFED's programs is the peer support it facilitates and encourages by supporting "groups of girls" in each community. This approach also contributes to a more positive school culture in which girls are better represented. CAMFED secondary school programs are operating in Ghana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Tanzania.

### *USAID*

In an effort to encourage more young Guinean girls to go to school, and to stay in school, the American Mission in Guinea has created \$100,000 scholarship fund, through funds provided by the Education for Development and Democracy Initiative (EDDI) presidential initiative. The Ambassador's Girls' Scholarship Program, announced by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in October of 1999, is administered through Winrock International (an American NGO) and by FEG/FAWE (Forum of Guinean Women Educationalists) and their parent NGO, FAWE (Forum of African Women Educationalists). The fund is dedicated to supporting girls' access and retention in primary and secondary education.

The EDDI initiative is a direct result of President Clinton's March 1998 visit to Africa. EDDI, administered through USAID/Washington, aims to improve the level and quality of education in Africa, and to encourage the integration of Africa into the global free-market economy. The overall challenge is to render African educational systems more relevant to the needs of the 21st Century in order to permit Africa to take better advantage of future economic growth and trade opportunities.

This entails both making primary educational systems more equitable and efficient, and skills training at higher levels more pertinent with a special emphasis on the participation of girls and young women in the educational process. Viewing the particular difficulties that many African girls have in entering and staying in the educational system, EDDI created the Ambassador's Girls' Scholarship Fund.

In applying the scholarship program to the Guinean context, quality and equity in education means starting with very basic educational issues: access and retention. Guinea has one of the lowest girl's enrollment rates, and one of the highest early pregnancy rates in the world, due to early marriages. Therefore, enrolling girls in school and keeping them in school past elementary school is a big challenge. Currently, the girl's enrollment rate is 44 percent as opposed to 70 percent for boys. Even more serious is the gap between girls' enrollment rates in rural areas, 26 percent, and that of boys in rural areas, 52 percent.

To help boost girls' enrollment and retention rates, EDDI granted the American Embassy, USAID, and Peace Corps a \$98,500 scholarship fund. The fund will support girls in rural areas that are at high risk of not continuing their education past elementary or middle school. Most scholarship recipients will be girls in exam-level classes in the 6th, 10th,

and 12th grades. A small portion of the funds will be used to support after-school tutoring programs run by teachers, principals, and community members. \$30,000 of the fund will go to support four regional girls' leadership seminars run by the Peace Corps volunteers.

FEG, the local NGO responsible for implementing the scholarship fund in Guinea is currently one of the most active Guinean organizations in implementing programs for girls' education, and has already successfully implemented two national scholarship programs in Guinea. A steering committee comprised of representatives from the American Mission, the Guinean government, UNICEF, and Plan Guinea has been formed to work with FEG to oversee the program, and to help with in choosing the scholarship beneficiaries. Community participation being an important part of keeping girls' in school, each scholarship recipient or tutoring program will have active community members guaranteeing the success of the student or the program. FEG will also be receiving guidance in implementing the fund from its international umbrella association, FAWE.

### *UNICEF*

UNICEF, also, in line with its global mandate to coordinate the systematic girls' education initiative, has recently set out a strategy to accelerate progress on realizing commitments to girls' education. This is being done through partnerships with governments, civil society, the private sector, and the UN Country Team as a contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through UNDAF II. One of the key issues of girls' education which UNDAF II seeks to address is inadequacy of financial investment in girls' education programs compared to the real value and benefits of girls' education to the household, community, society, and the nation.

In addition, the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) underlines the crucial role of education in national development by making increased educational access and improved quality of education outcomes a key priority area. To support investment in education, the GPRS also proposes a higher percentage increase in government spending on education than that proposed for any of the other social sectors.

## **The Role of Civil Society: The FAWE Approach**

The Forum for African Women Educationalists with its unique blend of policymakers, educational practitioners and stake holders working at global, continental and national level, has been at the forefront of promoting education for girls in Africa. The organization, acting as a catalyst for sustained action in the area of girls' education has called for access, equity, retention, performance, and quality. FAWE's major approaches to problem-solving in Africa include: 1) consultation between countries to determine best practices; 2) demonstration of what works by giving small funds to projects, and then selling the success of those projects; and 3) education and empowerment of young girls themselves. Dr. Penina Mlama, FAWE Executive Director, met with Melvia Hasman, Director of the American Cultural Center, to thank the U.S. Government for supporting girls' education in Guinea through the EDDI initiative. Mlama says the initiative continues to be an important factor in keeping girls in school in African countries such as Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Zambia. Says Mlama, "This last point is very important-we must have constant contact

with the young girls. Unless the girls themselves say they will not accept certain situations, things will not change. They must be empowered to change their own situation.” Well-known and supported internationally by donors like the World Bank, the Rockefeller, Ford and Carnegie foundations, and numerous Scandinavian governments, FAWE is also currently leading the working group on girls’ education for the American Association of Education in Africa. On October 26, 2000, Contemporary concerns of the FAWE working group include combining cross-sectoral issues in girls’ education such as girl’s reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS prevention. Other issues currently on the organization’s priority agenda include looking at the connection between poverty and girls’ attrition rates, and school as an unsafe environment due, among other things, to sexual harassment. Particular issues such as the management of menstruation have been brought up and in countries like Uganda, male advocates have been sensitized to break the silence around it.

The FAWE Centres of Excellence has been selected as a case study for many reasons. Firstly, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) whose focus is to ensure the full participation of African girls in education, has continent-wide reach with chapters in 3-countries. This provides a significant potential for going to scale with a successful intervention. Secondly, FAWE is an organization whose membership is made up of women in policymaking position in the education sector (ministers, vice-chancellors, and senior administrators). It also in addition to its National Chapters, has associate members which include men and institutions. The nature of the organization, its membership and its operational style puts it in touch with both the national policymaking bodies as well as communities and individual institutions. FAWE has lead a largely successful campaign to put the education of the African girl child in a prominent place on the African policy planning agenda and to expand access for them in the class room. In recognition of its leading role, FAWE is currently the convener for the Association for the Development of Education’s Working Group on Girl’s Education.

## **FAWE Centres of Excellence: Making the Case for the Holistic Approach<sup>9</sup>**

The FAWE Centres of Excellence best represent the work that the organization has sought to do at the level of secondary education. This intervention seeks to create model school and community environments in disadvantaged areas which are physically, academically, and socially gender-responsive. This is to ensure that girls from these areas have access to schooling and that once they are in school the gender constraints that could lead to dropping out or poor performance are either eliminated or minimized.

The vision of this FAWE Project is to produce girls who are life-long learners with the capacities to be:

- Best academic and social achievers,
- Confident and able to express themselves adequately,
- Active participants in diagnosing and solving problems and actualizing their ambitions,

---

9. Material from this section has been taken from FAWE (2004c).

- Knowledgeable in historical, cultural and current events and aware of their rights,
- Physically and psychologically fit, and
- Part of society at the grassroots, national and possibly international levels.

The intervention is generally driven by the following strategies:

1. Involvement of all stakeholders—Students, parents, communities, teachers, school management and ministries of education in the process of transforming the school and its surrounding community into a gender-responsive environment physically, academically and socially.
2. Capacity-building stakeholders, individually or in groups with gender sensitization and skills training.
3. Provision of the basic requirements in terms of gender-responsive infrastructure, teaching, and learning materials.

The FAWE program has evolved some distinct techniques from the above overarching strategies. In its publication *Creating a Conducive School Environment, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania*, FAWE (2004c) makes a step-by-step presentation on how Centres of Excellence are created.

*Step 1: Initial Consultation.* The FAWE National Chapter of the country concerned is expected to take the lead by consulting the Ministry of Education and the FAWE Regional Secretariat.

*Step 2: Agreement.* The parties so consulted agree to:

- Work out the objectives, programs, activities and operations of the COE,
- Demarcate the roles and responsibilities of the Chapter and the Secretariat, and
- Sign a Memorandum of Understanding for the agreed operations of the COE.

*Step 3: Identification of Schools to be Transformed into COE and Demarcation of Roles and Responsibilities.* This involves the collection and analysis of gender disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data on status of education, socioeconomic parameters cultural, political and policy-related factors. The exercise is jointly undertaken by the FAWE secretariat, the National Chapter and the Ministry of Education. They subsequently design a collaborative agreement spelling out the roles and responsibilities of various partners namely the school, the community, the MOE, the National Chapter and the FAWE Regional Secretariat.

*Step 4. Conducting a Vision Workshop for All Stakeholders.* This is undertaken to marshal support for the important members of the community. An effort is made to include representatives from the following constituencies:

- The school (including teaching, administrative and support staff, students, and the parent association),
- The local community leaders (including men, women, youth, local NGOs, and CBOs),

- The local government (chiefs, district commissioner, and others),
- The MOE at the national, regional, district and local levels,
- FAWE National Chapter members, and
- FAWE Regional Secretariat.

*Step 5: Collection of Quantitative and Qualitative Data on the COE and its Community.* This is to assist in identifying the specific problems and needs of the community in relationship to the education of the girl child. The resultant data should provide a needs assessment of the school comprising among other things the physical infrastructure, teacher qualifications, learning materials, status of students in terms of income levels of parents, life skills, counseling and bursaries; cultural practices of surrounding community and effect on girls' education and community involvement in the school.

*Step 6: Development of Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators Based on Needs Assessment, for Use in Participatory Process.*

*Step 7: Monitoring and Evaluation of the Implementation Process.*

### ***Implementation of the COE Package***

The interventions of the COE are put together as a package to be undertaken in a participatory manner. Stakeholders are typically involve a combination of the following:

- Gender sensitization of parents, community leaders, community members, teachers, boys, and girls,
- In-service training for teachers involving gender responsive pedagogy,
- Empowerment of girls, providing them skills in confidence building, assertiveness, self expression, decision making and negotiation,
- Training in reproductive health with emphasis on sexuality and protection against HIV and AIDS,
- Establishment of counseling desks and training on teachers and students in relevant skills,
- Provision of scholarships and support to needy girls,
- Provision of gender responsive infrastructure including boarding facilities, separate toilets for boys and girls, and
- Activities to involve the community and other stakeholders in the school operations.

To give an idea of the FAWE Centres of Excellence at a glance, Table 17 presents a summary of essential information about them which includes information about the location of the COE, the type of school, the challenges which the COE has been set up to address, the number of stakeholders and partners mobilized, and the positive trends achieved by the operation of the Centre.

### ***Comments on Impact of COEs***

COE's selected have been ordinary government schools mostly in deprived areas and interventions have been made in a positive policy environment often at the very highest level.

**Table 17. FAWE Pilot Centres of Excellence at a Glance**

| COE                 | School Type   | Challenges  | Numbers Mobilised  | Positive Trends   |
|---------------------|---|---|--|---|
| AIC, Kajaido, Kenya | Primary girls' only boarding                              | Poor, nomadic community, entrenched practice of early marriages, poor community support for girls' education  | 660 girls<br>1320 parents<br>32 teachers<br>21 MOE staff<br>75 chiefs<br>66 lobby women  | High retention, rescued 52 girls from early marriage, 12 reconciled, pass rate moved from 65% to 85%, chiefs participated in 4 workshops and are actively involved in advocacy for girls' education. 12 computers from community and 2 from FAWE Girls involved in school activities and government. On request of MOE second COE set up at Athwana, Meru District. Active bursary scheme for the needy including HIV/AIDS orphans. |
| Diourbel, Senegal   | Junior Secondary, day co-educational                      | Islamic community with low expectations on investment in girls' education, poor Sahelian rural, low value attached to education   | 415 girls<br>600 boys<br>2030 parents<br>22 teachers<br>18 MOE staff   | Girls' enrollment improved significantly, Drop out rate lowered, Girls' performance improved, community involved in advocacy, Policy support at highest level, Government built classes and provided tax exemptions, and bought books Bursary scheme, COE concept adopted in 10-year educational plan.  |
| Mgugu, Tanzania     | Secondary co-educational boarding for girls, day for boys | Few schools at secondary level, poor community, historical non-enrollment of girls beyond primary level due to distance, parents discouraged due to lack of returns and success | 100 girls<br>60 boys girls'<br>240 parents<br>7 teachers<br>42 MOE staff<br>48 councilors<br>501 religious and other community members | Dramatic improvement in enrollment, teenage pregnancy not experienced though rampant in other schools, drop outs followed up, improved participation in class, increased community support, bursary scheme, database to track academic and social performance of students. Support from highest level. On MOEC request COE replicated at Lufilyo secondary School, Mbeya.   |

*(continued)*

**Table 17. FAWE Pilot Centres of Excellence at a Glance (continued)**

| COE             | School Type                    | Challenges  | Numbers Mobilised   | Positive Trends   |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Kacyiru, Rwanda | Secondary girls' only boarding | Poor, mostly orphaned over children due to 1994 genocide, no secondary school for the girls in the area | 720 girls<br>800 girls guardians and parents<br>18 teachers<br>13 MOE staff | Girls' trauma contained, empowerment, excellent class participation and performance (6 students among top 20 in national exam in 2003) Tuseme clubs replicated by MOE, Local authorities actively involved, labs, database bursaries, sick bay, partnership with other schools. |

Source: FAWE (2004c).

For example, Presidents Kagame of Rwanda, Moi of Kenya, and Mkapa of Tanzania opened the centers in their respective countries. In the case of Tanzania, the following government policies have also been enacted:

- Free primary education,
- Re-entry for adolescent mothers,
- Bursaries for needy girls,
- Appointment of more female teachers,
- Inclusion of separate toilets for boys and girls, and
- Inclusion of life skills in curriculum.

Through collaborative action, infrastructure, and learning materials have been provided, staff augmented and training given, community ownership established, and students (including boys where relevant) empowered to affirm the access and persistence of girls in secondary education.

The land mark "Tuseme" (Speak Out) approach has ensured the formation of clubs which use the theatre for development approach to ensure the involvement of girls in their own empowerment has been very successful. Girls have been able to address each other as well as adults in their communities on issues which have been difficult to raise outside the safe sphere of drama. It has also been used to affirm positive values and attitudes. It is to be mainstreamed in all schools in Rwanda, for example.

## Challenges of the COE Concept

Table 18 provides an idea of the cost of sustaining the COE in a number of countries. The expenditures allocated over a three-year period have been provided. These figures cover the number of students in each center and the cost per student. An infrastructure grant as

**Table 18. Costs of the Centres of Excellence**

|                 |                           | 2001        | 2002        | 2003       |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| <b>Kenya</b>    | Number of students        | 650         | 535         | 507        |
|                 | Infrastructure            | \$26,000.00 | \$24,000.00 | 0          |
|                 | Cost per student          | \$4.0       | \$4.48      | 0          |
|                 | Gender responsive package | \$26,000.00 | \$29,289.53 | \$4,257.63 |
|                 | Cost per student          | \$10.00     | \$13.68     | \$2.09     |
| <b>Rwanda</b>   | Number of students        | 450         | 650         | 740        |
|                 | Infrastructure            | 0           | 0           | 0          |
|                 | Cost per student          | 0           | 0           | 0          |
|                 | Gender responsive package | \$32,000.00 | \$25,000.00 | \$7,605    |
|                 | Cost per student          | \$15.27     | \$9.61      | \$2.59     |
| <b>Senegal</b>  | Number of students        | 615         | 764         | 900        |
|                 | Infrastructure            | \$24,551.00 | \$38,500.00 | —          |
|                 | Cost per student          | \$3.99      | \$5.03      | 0          |
|                 | Gender responsive package | \$27,965.00 |             |            |
|                 | Cost per student          | \$11.36     | \$7.50      | \$6.37     |
| <b>Tanzania</b> | Number of students        | 240         | 240         | 240        |
|                 | Infrastructure            | \$26,000.00 | \$46,000.00 | \$8,400.00 |
|                 | Cost per student          | \$10.83     | \$19.16     | \$3.5      |
|                 | Gender responsive package | \$29,000.00 | \$26,562.00 | \$9,230.00 |
|                 | Cost per student          | \$30.20     | \$27.66     | \$9.61     |

Source: FAWE (2004c).

well as the “Gender Responsive Package” raised for each COE is shown. The Gender Responsive Package requires a front-end outlay which is quite high. The schools which have been supported do not necessarily have the optimum supplies of learning materials. Furthermore, the poverty in the surrounding communities has not been tackled, and therefore some students continue to have difficulties with clothing and other basic necessities for schools. Furthermore, some cultural practices like Female Genital Mutilation still persist in some communities, as do gender in-sensitive teaching methodologies among teachers.



# Concluding Observations

---

## Quality Factor

In contrast to the current situation in most other regions, investment in education in Sub-Saharan Africa continues to focus largely on expanding enrollments rather than on higher per student spending. The pupil-teacher ratio, which had been declining, is now up to 40 pupils per teacher (UNESCO 2002). Input indicators and system process indicators such as grade repetition and dropout are useful proxies for a vital element of educational quality, namely learning outcomes.

Research in Kenya showed that girls are more likely than boys to drop out of school in the case of negative attitudes and discrimination (Mensch and Lloyd 1998; Lloyd, Mensch, and Clark 1998). Unlike boys, their achievement is also poorer when teachers think they are naturally less capable, which is also the case when parents themselves hold their daughters' abilities in lower estimation. In such cases, girls perform worse on exams than do girls whose parents do not share the same view (Appleton 1995).

A quality education, one which promotes equality in the learning environment and equality of opportunity, should be the direction for policy, program, and project goals. A quality education would address the issues that pose barriers to girls' access, participation and achievement, and the risks that threaten adolescent girls' well-being and life opportunities.

## Importance of Intersectoral Approaches

Some strategies are better than others in creating quality education and achieving gender equality, and multiple strategies and intersectoral approaches are the most effective. Intersectoral approaches are necessary to address the barriers and needs affecting adolescent girls.



HIV/AIDS, poverty and work, early pregnancy and marriage, sexual abuse, and trafficking all must be confronted, while skill development, including an emphasis on science and technology, is important to prepare adolescent girls to participate in meaningful work, along with empowerment and leadership opportunities to participate in social and civil society. Intersectoral strategies require partnerships among government social sectors, international organizations, NGOs, business, religious organizations and leaders, communities and adolescents to mobilize support, to provide educational opportunities and to make broader macro-level change.

## Involvement of Students

Recent innovations that utilize a gender approach involving adolescent girls and boys are showing promise in addressing barriers facing girls' participation in education. Adolescent girls and boys can have an influence on supporting girls to attend school, preventing them from dropping out, and helping them achieve. Adolescent girls and boys also need to learn how to relate to each other in healthy ways. More attention needs to be given to the development of innovative projects that have an impact on changing girls and boys' behavior and that advance equality in the learning experience and equality of opportunity.

While there is considerable literature outlining policy directions for post-primary education and alternative options for adolescent girls, there is a lack of research that includes evidence and comprehensive data on girls' participation in alternative approaches to education. Data collection and development of additional indicators to assess the participation of girls in nonformal and alternative educational options are necessary for better policy and programmatic planning and evaluation. Rigorous studies on the impacts of strategies used in, and the cost-effectiveness and comparative advantage of, alternative education programs are necessary to determine their effectiveness in achieving their goals, and subsequently, in improving adolescent girls' lives and affecting societal change.

## Expanding Opportunities

In Africa, enrollments have grown substantially. Since 1990, primary enrollment grew by 42 million and secondary enrollment by 18 million. Between 1998 and 2002, growth was substantially faster than in previous periods. Indeed, at the primary level, Africa had the highest growth rate among all regions. Since 1995, population growth has slowed while enrollments have increased. Between 1998 and 2002, enrollments grew by 5 percent annually with a corresponding growth of less than 2 percent in the school-age population, resulting in a considerable increase in primary gross enrollment ratios from 81 to 91 percent. The number of secondary students also grew substantially, about 5 percent annually, with a higher rate of increase in between 1998 and 2002. Since 1998, this resulted in an increase in the secondary gross enrollment ratio of 4 percentage points, from 33 to 37 percent.

Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, Mozambique, and Niger achieved large gains in primary enrollment (40 percent growth or higher) between 1998 and 2002. In all these countries, except Niger, secondary enrollment grew at an even faster pace. Growth at the secondary level has also been substantial relative to that in primary, but this is partly due

to starting from a lower baseline. However, managing growth is a question of resources, and secondary education typically demands more resources per pupil than primary education.

The barriers to girls' access to secondary education are complex, diverse and interrelated. As Kane (2004) argues and various interventions such as the FAWE COEs confirm, a multiple-process driven strategy that works to improve girls' education outcomes is one that attempts to tackle all the main factors constraining girls' participation in school. Gender-specific interventions on their own will not necessarily lead to better educational outcomes for girls; there is the need for system-wide interventions as well. Educational paths are crucially constructed by factors related to sociocultural background, images of self, personal abilities and educational opportunities. Therefore, in addition to looking at the education and training system in itself, the wider non-educational environment outside the education system should be taken into consideration. Socially-constructed space including schools, institutions, and social relations at various levels may be defined as an enabling environment. Given the particular vulnerabilities and strengths of the adolescent girls, they must crucially be committed to their own empowerment and must be positively partnered by the males who play a role in their lives.

### **Taking Best Practices to Scale**

The above examination of gender equity in junior and senior secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa reveals that secondary education has fallen through the cracks and requires a more nuanced database to provide up-to-date information for policy formulation and the monitoring and evaluation of interventions currently being conducted. Finally, in spite of the complexities, some interventions are working and appear sustainable therefore, information on these models should be widely disseminated and they should be taken to scale where suitable.



# References

---

- Action Aid. 2004. *Stop Violence Against Girls in School*. Johannesburg.
- Al-Samarrai, S., and H. Zaman. 2002. "The Changing Distribution of Public Education Expenditure in Malawi." Africa Region Working Paper Series No. 29, the World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- Ampofo, Akosua Adomako, and others. 2004. "Women's and Gender Studies in English-Speaking Sub-Saharan Africa, A Review of Research in the Social Sciences." *Gender and Society* 8(6).
- Blakemore, K. 1976. "Resistance to Education in Ghana: A Sociological Study on Declining Enrollment." Unpublished PhD Thesis, Centre for West African Studies, University of Birmingham.
- Boakye, J.K.A. 1997. "Synthesis of Research on Girls' Education in Ghana." The Girls' Education Unit, Ministry of Education, Accra, Ghana.
- Boakye J.K.A., S. Agyeman-Duah, J. Osei, and M. Brew-Ward. 1997. "Causes of Drop Out from Basic Education in Ghana: A Research Report." The Girls' Education Unit, Ministry of Education, Accra, Ghana.
- Buchman, Claudia. 1996. "The Debt Crisis, Structural Adjustment and Women's Education: Implications for Status and Social Development." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 37:5–30.
- Casely-Hayford, L., with S. Wilson. 2001. "How the Poor Get Poorer. Investigation of the Needs of Females in Rural Deprived Areas." The Girls' Education Unit, Ministry of Education, Accra, Ghana.
- CHER (The Coalition for Health and Education Rights). 2002. "User fees: the right to education and health denied." A policy brief for the UN Special Session on Children, New York.
- Daily Trust. 2006. "Nigeria: Deboarding in Katsina Forces Girls into Street Hawking." Abuja. November 3.
- FAWE (Forum for African Women Educationalist). 2004a. *AIC Girls' Primary School Kajiado District, Kenya*. The Quest for Quality in Girls Education: Fawe Centres of Excellence Series. Nairobi.
- . 2004b. *Addressing Sexual Maturation in Relation to Education of Girls: Uganda*. Best Practices in Girls' Education in Africa Series. Nairobi.
- . 2004c. *Creating a Conducive School Environment: Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania*. Best Practices in Girls' Education in Africa Series. Nairobi.
- . 2004d. *Experiences in the Provision of Girls' Education in Conflict Situations: Sierra Leone*. Best Practices in Girls' Education in Africa Series. Nairobi.
- . 2004e. *The FAWE Girls' School Gisozi, Rwanda*. The Quest for Quality in Girls Education: Fawe Centres of Excellence Series. Nairobi.
- . 2004f. *Grand Diourbel Junior Secondary School Diourbel, Senegal*. The Quest for Quality in Girls Education: Fawe Centres of Excellence Series. Nairobi.



- . 2004g. *Mugugu Secondary School, Kilosa District, Tanzania*. The Quest for Quality in Girls Education: Fawe Centres of Excellence Series. Nairobi.
- . 2004h. *Protecting Girls in School from HIV/AIDS: Kenya*. Best Practices in Girls' Education in Africa Series. Nairobi.
- . 2004i. *Re-entry for Adolescent School Girl Mothers: Zambia*. Best Practices in Girls' Education in Africa Series. Nairobi.
- FAWEU (FAWE Uganda Chapter). 2001. "Barriers to Participation in Schools." Makerere University, Kampala.
- Forsythe, Nancy, Roberto Patricio Korzeniewicz, and Valerie Durrant. 2000. "Gender Inequalities and Economic Growth: A Longitudinal Evaluation." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 48(April):573–617.
- Hallam, R. 1994. *Crimes without punishment: sexual harassment and violence against female students in schools and universities in Africa*. London: African Rights.
- Herz, Barbara, and Gene B. Sperling. 2004. *What works in girls' education: Evidence and policies from the developing world*. Council on Foreign Relations, Inc.
- Holsinger, D., and R. Cowell. 2000. *Positioning Secondary-School Education in Developing Countries*. Paris: IIEP/UNESCO.
- Human Rights' Watch. 2001. *Scared at School: Sexual Violence Against Girls in South African Schools*. New York.
- Johnson, Rebecca, and Steven Kyle. 2001. "Determinants of Girls' School Enrollment in Ghana." Working Paper, Department of Applied Economy and Management, Cornell University, New York.
- Kane, E. 2004. *Girls' Education in Africa: What Do We Know About Strategies that Work?* Africa Region Human Development Working Paper Series, The World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- Kelly, M.J. 2000. *Planning for Education in the Context of HIV/AIDS*. Paris: IIEP/UNESCO.
- Leach, F., V. Fiscian, E. Kadzamira, E. Lemani, and P. Machakanja. 2003. *An Investigative Study into the Abuse of Girls in African Schools*. London: DFID.
- Leach, F., and P. Machakanja. 2000. *A Preliminary Investigation into the Abuse of Girls in Zimbabwean Junior Secondary Schools*. DFID Education Research No. 39. London: DFID.
- Lewin, K., and Y. Sayed. 2005. *Non-Government Secondary Schooling in Sub-Saharan Africa: Exploring the Evidence in South Africa and Malawi*. London: Department for International Development.
- Lloyd, C.B., B.S. Mensch, and W.H. Clark. 1998. *The Effects of Primary School Quality on the Educational Participation and Attainment of Kenyan Girls and Boys*. New York: Population Council.
- Mensch, B.S., and C.B. Lloyd. 1999. "Implications of Formal Schooling for Girls' Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries." In *Critical Perspectives on Schooling and Fertility in the Developing World*. National Research Council.
- Mirsky, J. 2003. *Beyond Victims and Villains: Addressing Sexual Violence in the Education Sector*. London: The Panos Institute.
- O'Connor, Joseph. 2003. "School Science and Technology for girls in Sub-Saharan Africa." In Edgar Jenkins, *Innovations in Science and Technology Education, Vol. VIII*. Paris: UNESCO.



- Prah, M. 2002. "Gender Issues in Ghanaian Tertiary Institutions: Women Academics and Administrators at Cape Coast University." An Article to appear in *Ghana Studies* Vol. 5. Accra, Ghana.
- Quist, Hubert O. 2003. "Secondary Education—A Tool for National Development in Ghana. A Critical Appraisal of the Post Colonial Context." *African Development* 28(3&4):186–210.
- Sutherland-Addy, E. 2002. "Impact Assessment of the Girls' Education Programme in Ghana." Summary Report for UNICEF-Ghana.
- Sutherland-Addy and others. 1995. "Study on Developing Feasible Strategies to Increase Female Participation in Tertiary Education Particularly Science and Technology." Development and Women's Studies Unit, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Accra.
- UNESCO. 1997. *Report on the State of Education in Africa: Challenges and Reconstruction*. Dakar: UNESCO/BREDA.
- . 1998. *Statistical Yearbook*. Paris.
- . 2000. *The Dakar Framework for Action*. Paris.
- . 2002. *Education for All: Guidelines for Preparing Gender Responsive EFA Plans*. Paris.
- . 2003. *Gender and Education for All: The Leap to Equality*. EFA Global Monitoring Report. Paris.
- . 2004. *Education for All: The Quality Imperative*. EFA Global Monitoring Report. Paris.
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2004. *Global Education Digest 2004*. Montreal.
- . 2005. *Global Education Digest 2005*. Montreal.
- UNEVOC/BREDA. 1996. *The Development of Technical and Vocational Education in Africa*. Dakar.
- Wolf, J., and K. Kainja. 1999. "Changes in Girls' Lives: Malawi from 1990 to 1997." Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank, London/Washington.
- World Bank. 1995. *Priorities and Strategies for Education*. Washington, D.C.
- . 2003. *World Development Indicators*. Washington, D.C.
- . 2005. *Expanding Opportunities and Building Competencies for Young People: A New Agenda for Secondary Education*. Washington, D.C.



# Eco-Audit

## Environmental Benefits Statement

The World Bank is committed to preserving Endangered Forests and natural resources. We print World Bank Working Papers and Country Studies on 100 percent postconsumer recycled paper, processed chlorine free. The World Bank has formally agreed to follow the recommended standards for paper usage set by Green Press Initiative—a nonprofit program supporting publishers in using fiber that is not sourced from Endangered Forests. For more information, visit [www.greenpressinitiative.org](http://www.greenpressinitiative.org).

In 2007, the printing of these books on recycled paper saved the following:

| Trees*   | Solid Waste | Water   | Net Greenhouse Gases              | Total Energy |
|--|-------------|---------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| 264  | 12,419      | 96,126  | 23,289                            | 184 mil.     |
| <small>*40' in height and<br/>6-8" in diameter</small> | Pounds      | Gallons | Pounds CO <sub>2</sub> Equivalent | BTUs         |



*Gender Equity in Junior and Senior Secondary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa* is part of the World Bank Working Paper series. These papers are published to communicate the results of the Bank's ongoing research and to stimulate public discussion.

This thematic study consists of case studies of Ghana, Malawi, and Uganda, as well as, a review of studies undertaken over the past ten years on education in Africa with particular attention to girls' and secondary education. Gender equity at the primary level has been the focus of considerable attention within the Education for All Framework of Action, but much less so at the secondary level. Evidence of gender inequity and inequality in terms of access, retention and performance in secondary education in SSA raises many questions. While transition rates from primary to secondary are higher for girls than boys, and the repetition rates are lower, girls still significantly trail behind boys in graduation and enrollment rates. The purpose of this study is to document and analyze the extent and nature of gender disadvantage in junior and senior secondary education, to analyze the causes of this disadvantage, and to identify strategies that may be effective in reducing or eliminating it.

This study was prepared as part of the Secondary Education and Training in Africa (SEIA) initiative which aims to assist countries to develop sustainable strategies for expansion and quality improvements in secondary education and training. All SEIA products are available on its website: [www.worldbank.org/afr/seia](http://www.worldbank.org/afr/seia).

World Bank Working Papers are available individually or on standing order. Also available online through the World Bank e-Library ([www.worldbank.org/elibrary](http://www.worldbank.org/elibrary)).



**THE WORLD BANK**  
1818 H Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20433 USA  
Telephone: 202 473-1000  
Internet: [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)  
E-mail: [feedback@worldbank.org](mailto:feedback@worldbank.org)

ISBN 978-0-8213-7505-1



SKU 17505