A world where all girls and boys are empowered through quality education
“Education is a right, but it is not a reality for too many women and girls. Education sends a message – a message of confidence and hope. It tells that child: you have a future; what you think matters.”

United Nations Secretary-General’s Global Initiative on Education 2012

Every Girl has the Right to Education

All children, girls and boys, have the right to education. Educating girls also delivers huge social and economic benefits to the individual, her community and country:

- When a girl is educated she marries later, has fewer, healthier children and is less likely to die in childbirth
- Each additional year of education boosts a person’s wages by 10%. For girls, the rate of return is as high as 15%
- When 10% more girls go to school, a country’s GDP increases on average by 3%

Yet, girls continue to be denied their right to education because of attitudes to their role; because they bear the burden of domestic work, sibling care and early marriage; and because they experience violence at or on the way to school.
Girls’ Education in East Asia and Pacific

East Asia and the Pacific is the world’s most populous region and possesses a stunning diversity in political and economic systems, ethnicity and culture.

Significant progress has been made in narrowing the gender gap in education and improving absolute gender parity – an equal number or proportion of girls and boys accessing educational opportunities.

However, in many countries girls still receive less years of education than boys, particularly in remote and rural areas and among poor and ethno-linguistic minority communities. Additionally, in some countries we are seeing a “reverse gender gap” in the relative underachievement of boys.

To address these gender inequalities we need to ensure girls and boys experience the same high quality education and learning. Issues such as discrimination in the classroom, physical and sexual violence and classroom materials that promote negative gender stereotypes must be addressed.

Achieving gender equality in education can transform societies. Let’s begin today!
“My teacher teaches us good habits, behaviour, and supports us to get involved in many extra-curricular activities. She treats girls and boys equally and involves both in every activity without any differences. She helps us to be friends and help each other without gender difference.

Yashwant, 8, India

The UNGEI Drawing Contest 2012-2013

The drawings in this notebook are all winners of the 2012-2013 drawing contest run by the East Asia Pacific Regional and South Asia Regional UNGEI. The UNGEI drawing contest aims to raise public awareness of regional issues of gender equality in education and paint a picture of the benefits of education for all children.

Young people across the region were asked to draw a picture on the theme “What can a teacher do to ensure girls and boys benefit equally from quality education?”

The contest was open to all young people in the Asia Pacific aged 18 years and under. 15 winning entries were chosen from each of the participating countries by the public.
UNGEI in East Asia and Pacific

The East Asia Pacific Regional UN Girls’ Education Initiative is a network of experts and organizations promoting the right to education and gender equality for all.

The regional group aims to strengthen programmes for girls’ education by ensuring national education plans are gender responsive. We do this through:

- Policy advocacy
- Sharing best practices, information and data
- Building partnerships at the regional and country level

Connect with us

eapungei@unicef.org  facebook.com/UNGEI
ungei.org  twitter.com/UNGEI
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Gender responsive teacher policies that ensure there are female and male teachers at all levels of education help promote gender equality. The enrolment of girls in secondary education is higher in countries with high proportions of female teachers in primary education.
There are more female than male teachers in East Asia and the Pacific. However, in some countries the shortage of male teachers has been identified as a key factor in the low motivation, underperformance and high dropout rates seen in boys and male adolescents.
Language needs to be taken into account in teacher training and recruitment. 61% of minority languages are found in the Asia Pacific region. Multilingual education can improve learning for children from minority language communities. This especially benefits girls as it is often girls and women who are monolingual as they are less exposed to the national language through schooling, salaried labour or migration.
Girls and women are underrepresented in textbooks and gender roles are often reflected in highly stereotypical ways. Teachers can review and create new classroom materials that include girls and represent both girls and boys positively.
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Girls often receive less attention from teachers. Studies have demonstrated that boys are asked more questions, placed in priority areas of classrooms and given more leadership opportunities. Teachers can equally motivate and encourage boys and girls to perform.
Girls’ interest and participation in math and science are negatively impacted at an early age by the stereotype that boys are better in these subjects. Teachers can ensure that they do not perpetuate such gender bias and encourage all children to fulfil their potential.
In schools and classrooms girls are often asked to make tea, wash cups or sweep floors, while boys clear brush, cut grass and carry heavy items. Teachers can make sure to divide chores and activities fairly, not according to traditional gender roles.
Teachers can facilitate positive gender relations between girls and boys by encouraging them to play and work together and by supporting both girls and boys to identify their strengths and weaknesses, talents and interests.
Our appreciation goes to all our partners who supported the UNGEI 2012-2013 drawing contest. Special thanks go to UNESCO Bangkok for their coordination and management of the design and production of this notebook.