name 60 million girls
class none
Save the Children fights for vulnerable children in the UK and around the world who suffer from poverty, disease, injustice and violence. We work with them to find lifelong answers to the problems they face.

Li Hongjiao, 12, lives in Shuanjiang County in Yunnan, one of China’s poorest provinces.

“When I grow up I’d like to get a good job but I don’t think I’ll be able to because we’re very poor. My parents have to pay more than 2000 yuan (about £140) a year for my brother to go to middle school. My grandfather is the village leader, and he gives them the money to pay for my brother, but they won’t be able to afford to pay for me to go too. They’d like both of us to go, but they can’t afford it. They can only afford to pay for one.”

Sixty million girls

Discrimination, conflict and the prohibitive cost of school for poor families are depriving millions of girls of choice and opportunity.

In countries as far apart as Ethiopia, Pakistan, China and Colombia, 60 million girls are missing out on the rewards that education can bring. These are things that we take for granted, like being able to read the labels on medicines, having a choice of jobs and an income we can live on.

Around the world, one hundred million children are denied their rights to an education and to a childhood free from exploitation. Sixty per cent of them are girls.
Regional comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>School fees?</th>
<th>Boys out of school</th>
<th>Girls out of school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industrialised countries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African countries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Côte d'Ivoire</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian countries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin American countries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data supplied by UNESCO as most recent available data (2001/02). Fees column based on Tomasevski report 2003

Fadumo, 13, lives in the village of Agajin in Ethiopia. Her parents are farmers.

“A girl child is very different from the boys. She has to dress, she has to dye decorations on her skin [henna] and she has to wear good shoes and underwear. It’s a burden for girls. They have to get all these things to go to school and they’re expensive.

“There’s also the problem that parents have to work hard and they want their children to help them at home, especially girls. So it’s more difficult for girls to go to school. I think it’s important for girls to go to school so they learn to read and write. Then they can communicate with others and they can support their families.”

NB. School fees are registration fees, tuition fees and additional costs, like textbooks.
The delineation of international boundaries on this map must not be considered authoritative. Data taken from Tomasevski 2003 where available and World Bank 2002 for Comoros, Cape Verde, Dominica, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Senegal.

Worst 25 countries for girls out of school

- 60 per cent of girls out of school: Somalia, Niger, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic, Eritrea.
- 50-60 per cent of girls out of school: Yemen, Sudan, Benin, Chad, Bhutan, Burundi.
- 40-50 per cent of girls out of school: Comoros, Pakistan, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Senegal, Mozambique, Haiti, Angola.

[Listings are in order of highest percentage down in each category]

The school fees challenge

1. Costs of sending a child to state primary school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Liberia</th>
<th>Colombia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration fees</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>£16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition fees</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>£5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School maintenance and supplies</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>£20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>£14</td>
<td>£26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniforms</td>
<td>£180</td>
<td>£14</td>
<td>£14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (per annum)</td>
<td>£180</td>
<td>£33</td>
<td>£76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Average annual income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Liberia</th>
<th>Colombia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average annual income per person</td>
<td>£17,000</td>
<td>£62</td>
<td>£1,016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Liberia, it costs £33 a year to send a child to a government school. This does not sound much, but the average annual income is only £62, and school fees can account for more than half. This means it is equivalent to £8,500 in the UK – the cost of sending a child to an exclusive private school.
In Liberia, at least 40 per cent of girls are out of school. In the capital, Monrovia, an estimated 60 – 80 per cent of teenage girls want an education so much they sell the only commodity they have – their bodies – to fund it. “It is a big problem, sexual exploitation of young females. In fact, it is becoming the norm – the accepted way to fund education or to pay for somewhere to live. Other girls may live with a young man for this. So we cannot say that boys and girls have equal access.”

Teacher, Konobo district, Grand Gedeh, Liberia

Aimerance, 17, is from South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Her parents farm other people’s land for very low pay.

“I left school because my father had no money to pay for me. I spent my time at home. I was 14. One day a girl friend who I studied with visited me at my house and told me to join the armed forces. My friend was in a Congolese rebel faction in 2002. She said that I would do well if I joined.

“I was with them for two years. We suffered a lot. The men took us as their ‘wives’ – they treated us very badly. They didn’t consider the fact that we were still children. I felt like I had no more energy left within me. I felt so weak and feeble and like I had lost all of my intelligence.”

But the benefits of education can be enormous:

- Babies born to mothers who have been to primary school are twice as likely to live beyond five years of age.
- Rates of malnutrition and HIV/AIDS are much lower where girls are more able to go to school.
- Economic growth can increase where equal numbers of girls and boys receive education.

In conflict areas, girls who cannot afford to go to school are more likely to join armed groups, where they are forced to fight or become ‘wives’ to soldiers.

Failure to reach the 2005 target on girls’ education results in a million unnecessary child and maternal deaths every year. And, because they do not go to school, millions of girls around the world are missing out on the kind of childhood we take for granted.

So, should we get rid of school fees?
School attendance in Uganda

When primary school fees were abolished in Uganda in 1997, school attendance by girls more than doubled inside three years.

For Uganda, it also means the 2005 target of having the same number of girls in schools as boys has almost been reached. In 1994, girls made up 46 per cent of the school population. By 2003, this figure had crept up to 49 per cent.

In 2002, Tanzania abolished fees, followed by Kenya in 2003. In these three countries alone, nearly four million more children were immediately given the chance to enjoy the benefits of an education.

What does abolishing fees mean for girls?

When primary school fees were abolished in Uganda in 1997, school attendance by girls more than doubled inside three years.

Number of girls (millions)

What can the world do?

Sixty million girls face many barriers to getting an education. The cost of going to primary school is the greatest of these. If the world is to meet the Millennium Development Goal on universal primary education, school fees must be abolished as a first step.

Getting rid of school fees will bring millions more girls into the classroom. But it is not enough just to get girls into school. They need the right conditions for them to complete their education. By abolishing school fees, Kenya has brought 1.5 million more children into school, but some class sizes are more than 100.

Problems like this can only change if rich countries cancel international debts and deliver the $50 billion of aid needed now to meet the eight Millennium Development Goals. If poor countries are able to spend less on debts and more on education, governments can use the extra money to provide free education, build more schools, buy more books and train more teachers.

Yes, but how can this be done?
Save the Children has been raising the issue of girls’ education as part of our Make Child Poverty History campaign. Our Education for Girls campaign is being supported by high profile women whose education has helped bring them success.

“For any individual to realise and fulfill their potential, it’s essential that they receive even the most basic education. Tragically however, even in this age of modern technology, millions of young girls and women are condemned to lives of ignorance and servitude. Education is the passport to freedom of choice and opportunity.” Annie Lennox, singer/songwriter

My education has had a big hand in making me who and what I am. In this day and age education should not be a luxury or a privilege, but every human being’s right. Education allows you to stretch yourself intellectually and so equips you with one of life’s greatest tools.” Ruby Hammer, founder Ruby and Millie cosmetics

“My Punjabi mother had a great saying; ‘Educate a man and you educate one person, educate a woman and you educate the whole family.’ Women’s education is paramount because women who have knowledge and confidence also pass that onto their children, and they in turn pass it onto their children. By educating our girls, we are actually educating our future generations.” Meera Syal, actor/writer

More and better aid.
Debt relief for education.
UK takes the lead at UN Millennium Review Summit in New York in September, ensuring that countries develop a plan to deliver the goals.

School fees abolished, education made free and compulsory for all children. Increased aid and increased education budgets mean governments spend more on education in their own countries.

More learning opportunities for every illiterate woman – mothers’ literacy supports girls’ enrolment in school.

Goal of universal primary education achieved!
All children are in school, so they can complete six years of primary education by 2015.
As many girls as boys are in school. All girls have access to a safe and welcoming place to learn.

As many girls as boys are in school. All girls have access to a safe and welcoming place to learn.

Time to sort it out
The 2005 target of getting as many girls into school as boys has been missed. But the 2015 goal of giving every child a place at primary school can still be reached. The UK must take the lead in making sure the world develops a plan to deliver the Millennium Development Goal targets.

What can you do?
While rich governments made some progress in July 2005 at the G8 in Edinburgh, unless they act now, they will condemn yet another generation of children – most of them girls – to grow up without the education that is their right.

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You can help to ensure world leaders take action by emailing Tony Blair and by telling us what your education has done for you. Go to www.savethechildren.org.uk/girlseduction to find out now.
Save the Children is campaigning for free, quality education, which is relevant and accessible to all children, including the poorest and most marginalised. Our campaigning is informed by our programme experience and by the children we work with around the world. Our programme work can involve helping communities to run schools, train teachers, and support flexible learning schemes.

For example, in Ethiopia, Save the Children supports schools in the Somali region. We provide textbooks, teacher training and run workshops that encourage parents to send their daughters to school. The project has been so successful that the regional education bureau is replicating it at 196 sites across the region.

In Hyderabad, India, our education centre makes learning enjoyable and fits it around girls’ other needs, such as work. The experiences of girls in our programmes show how good education can transform a girl’s life.

Rizwana, 14, has gained confidence since attending Save the Children’s Hyderabad education centre.

“I used to be very afraid when I was at the other school. They used to hit us if we didn’t study. Here, they teach in different ways. They take extra effort to make weaker children understand.

“When I first came here, I was very scared. Slowly my fears have disappeared and now I have started talking to people. My family thinks I have become a brave girl – they can leave me alone at home when they go out.”

Cubai, 17, belongs to a Save the Children group in Jaibor, southern Sudan.

“We go out to the villages and encourage parents to let their daughters come to school. Everybody should have equal rights and it’s important that girls are allowed to come to school.”

“We encourage children to come to school because school offers a protective environment for children. We also raise awareness about harmful practices and the risks young people face if they start hanging around in the market.”

The data in 60 million girls is based on research compiled by Save the Children from:

- UNESCO Institute for Statistics
- the World Bank’s 2002 study into user fees in primary education
- a 2003 survey of school fees in 125 countries by Katarina Tomasevski, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education
- Save the Children’s policy briefing, Achieving the Gender Parity Millennium Development Goal: what needs to be done? (March 2005)
- Save the Children’s Education Assessment for Liberia (April 2005)
- the Global Campaign for Education’s 2005 briefing paper, Girls can’t wait.
2005
make it great for children
MAKE POVERTY HISTORY