

UNICEF inputs

OHCHR report on Realizing the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl

Introduction

What follows is UNICEF's approach to girls' education and gender equality – based on lessons learned and evidence that have informed UNICEF's global approach. That being said, every country context is different and therefore the barriers and recommendations are country specific.

Challenges

At the global level, progress towards gender parity in primary education has been significant, but the poorest girls remain out of school and, where disparity is most severe, it is generally girls that are most disadvantaged. Poverty and location often combine with gender to create deep inequalities within countries. Based on current trends, lower secondary school completion in sub-Saharan Africa will not be achieved until 2111 for the poorest girls, compared with 2051 for the richest girls and around 2090 for the poorest boys. Solutions will require the support of men and boys, as well as the leadership of women and girls.

One of the challenges is having the right **data on who is out of school**. Launched in 2010, the [Out-of-School Children Initiative](#) (OOSCI), a partnership between UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, is one example of how to translate data on equity in education into action to reach disadvantaged girls and boys. The initiative's central goal is to obtain a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children out of school worldwide. OOSCI starts at the country level by building the capacity of partner governments to conduct a statistical analysis of available data (often from household surveys) to produce detailed information on children who are out of school and at risk of dropping out. The evidence generated by this analysis consists of 'profiles' of children, disaggregated by characteristics such as sex, household wealth, urban or rural location, ethnicity, disability and child labour. These profiles enable the identification of the key barriers that are keeping or pushing children out of school, often including the hidden or indirect costs of education; cultural or systemic biases against girls, ethnic groups or children with disabilities; distance to school; and security issues. The findings from OOSCI studies are used in advocacy as well as upstream policy dialogue at the national level to advocate for changes in government policies and strategies to reduce or eliminate these barriers, and to assist governments with more equitable education sector planning. OOSCI has been extremely successful in increasing the number of countries that are able to identify the profiles of children out of school and analyse the barriers that have led to their exclusion.

Another big challenge once girls get to school is getting them to **complete lower secondary education**. The many additional benefits of educating girls, such as delayed marriage, lower fertility rates and greater civic engagement, are only fully realized when girls are able to complete lower secondary education. Progress for girls has been achieved at a slow pace – the percentage of countries in which girls are disadvantaged at lower secondary has fallen from 41 per cent in 2013 to 36 per cent in 2015. At the same time, the number of countries in which boys are disadvantaged has increased – from 22 per cent at the baseline to 27 per cent.

UNICEF approaches

UNICEF is supporting low and low-middle income countries to progressively realize SDG 4 of 12 years of quality primary, lower and upper secondary education for all. Advancing girls' education to secondary is one of four targeted priorities in the [UNICEF Gender Action Plan \(2014–2017\)](#). To reduce gender disparities and enable all girls and boys to have an equal opportunity to learn, UNICEF adopts a variety of evidence-based strategies at both primary and lower secondary. These include improving education quality, strengthening gender-responsive sector planning, engaging community support, and making schools more affordable, accessible and responsive to the specific needs of girls and boys. These are delivered through inter-sectoral programmes that recognise the way in which specific barriers may impact boys and girls differently.

The core work of UNICEF is to strengthen education systems to ensure quality education for all, while addressing the gendered barriers faced by girls and boys. This includes reviewing the curriculum and removing gender stereotypes from learning materials, providing gender training to teachers, supporting the use of learning assessment data in schools and at national level, and providing communities with key data to strengthen accountability. Mainstreaming gender considerations into national education sector plans and policies is key to ensuring that girls and boys enter and succeed at school. In 2015, UNICEF, UNGEI and the GPE developed guidelines for gender-responsive sector planning and designed workshops to build regional capacity.

Useful resources:

Mapping of the obstacles limiting the effective access of girls to education (esp. vis-à-vis boys) {

- [GEM report Gender Review – funded by UNICEF via UNGEI](#)
- [Policy Brief on School related gender based violence](#)
- [WIDE Inequalities in Education](#)
- [Sustainable Development begins with Education](#)
- [The Out of School Children's Initiative](#) - having the right data to know who is out of school, where and why

Comment [WI1]: Already reviewed in IO folder

Comment [WI2]: Already reviewed in IO folder

Comment [WI3]: Doesn't talk about why girls aren't accessing school, just gives the statistics in certain countries

Comment [WI4]: Not useful

Efforts, good practices, recommendations to eliminate gender disparities in education by 2030

- [Why Educating Girls Makes Economic Sense](#) - Jo Bourne, Associate Director of Education, UNICEF
- [The Investment Case for Education and Equity](#)
- [UNGEI Good Practice Fund](#)
- [A rigorous review of global research evidence on policy and practice on school-related gender-based violence](#)
- Through the Learning for Peace programme, UNICEF worked with government partners in 14 countries to address gender inequities in education faced by girls and boys in different humanitarian settings.
 - o [Gender Education and Peacebuilding – a review of selected Learning for Peace case studies](#)
 - o [Gender, Education and Peacebuilding Brief](#)

Comment [WI5]: Talks about barriers to education, but not for girls

Comment [WI6]: Website with case studies

Comment [WI7]: Already reviewed in IO folder

Comment [WI8]: Looking at: How can education interventions address gender inequalities in contexts of armed violent conflict and in the process contribute towards sustainable peace?

Comment [WI9]: Building peace and gender equality through education—not about access