Contents

Tables and Figures (overview)

Introduction

"I am now in Grade two. I am 15 years old and have been married twice, at the ages of 10 and 12. I did not stay with my second husband. My cousin advised me to go to school. I am the first child in my family and have three sisters and two brothers. I like my lessons, I stood seventh among 120 students. My younger sister was married, but because of my advice she now goes to school. My parents are not really willing to send me to school. Nevertheless, I want to continue and will advise other girls to do the same."
– TADFE TSEGA, ETHIOPIA

Three years ago, at the World Education Forum at Dakar, the international community re-affirmed its commitment to eliminating gender inequality in basic education provision throughout the world. Governments promised to:

- Ensure that by 2015 all children have access to, and complete, free education of good quality.

- Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to, and achievement in, basic good quality education.

At the UN's Millennium Summit, heads of state adopted these targets as two of the eight Millennium Development Goals for reducing world poverty (see Figure 1).

There is universal recognition of the paramount importance of ensuring that all children, both girls and boys, receive a basic education of at least eight years and of an acceptable quality. The education of girls has been recognised for several decades as a fundamental human right and a developmental necessity. Nevertheless, large gender disparities in enrolment and learning achievements persist. Eradicating these disparities is well within the power and spending capacity of the world's governments.

Failure to do so constitutes a massive denial of the basic human rights of tens of millions of girls in the developing world.

Despite individual success stories, very large inequalities still exist in the majority of developing countries, and the rate of progress needs to accelerate four-fold to achieve the gender equity goal. At this pace, the gender gap in primary education will not be closed until 2025, and Africa will not get all girls (and boys) into primary school for another 100 years (UNDP and UNICEF 2002). It is therefore essential that decisive action is taken by governments, civil society organisations and bilateral and multilateral agencies, to get girls into school.

Failure to educate girls is also holding back the wider push to halve global poverty by 2015. Education not only provides basic knowledge and skills to improve health and livelihoods, but it empowers women to take their rightful place in society and the development process. Education gives women the status and confidence to influence household decisions. Women who have been to school tend to marry later and have smaller families. Their children are also better nourished and are far more likely to do well at school. By contrast, the children of women who have never received an education are 50 per cent more likely to suffer from malnutrition or to die before the age of five (UNFPA 2002). Educating women is the key to breaking the cycle of poverty.

Because education is so crucial to improving health and increasing incomes, the girls' education goal has a domino effect on all of the other Millennium Development Goals. Failure to achieve it will set us up for almost certain failure on the other MDGs. Eliminating gender gaps in rural and urban primary school intake is a minimum threshold that must be

Box 1: Education Can Save Your Life

Education saves lives by giving women the confidence and power to make better choices for themselves and their children.

- In much of South Asia, women typically eat last and eat least. During pregnancy, this has disastrous consequences: high maternal and infant mortality, and low birth weight, which can cause serious health complications throughout the rest of the life cycle. Bangladeshi women with at least a fifth grade education are more likely to increase their food intake when they are pregnant – not just because they know they should, but because they are better able to influence household decisions.

- In Sub-Saharan Africa, HIV/AIDS infection rates have been falling dramatically among women with at least a secondary education – not just because they have better knowledge of how to prevent transmission, but because they have the status and confidence to assert their rights. In 17 countries in Africa and four in Latin America, better-educated girls tended to delay having sex, and were more likely to require their partners to use condoms. Since young women in Africa are up to five times more vulnerable to HIV infection than young men, denying them access to education may literally cost them their lives.

Sources: Jejeebhoy, S. J. 1995. Women's Education, Autonomy, and Reproductive Behaviour: Experiences from Developing Countries. Oxford: Clarendon Press. Karim, R. et al. 2002, 'Determinants of Food Consumption During Pregnancy in Rural Bangladesh: Examination of Evaluative Data from the Bangladesh Integrated Nutrition Project.' Tufts University, Food Policy and Applied Nutrition Programme, Discussion Paper no. 11, July 29. World Bank 2002, Education and HIV-AIDS: A window of hope. UNAIDS 2000, Report on the Global HIV-AIDS Epidemic. New York: UNAIDS.

achieved by 2005. If this timeline is allowed to slip, it will become impossible to achieve universal primary education by 2015. And, as UNDP has warned, if we fail to achieve UPE by 2015, the already uncertain prospects of attaining the other MDGs will dwindle beyond the vanishing point (Vandemoortele 2002; See Figure 1 on next page).

In order to achieve the goal of universal completion of primary education by 2015, it is necessary for all eligible children, both girls and boys, to start primary school on time by 2009/10, and to complete the primary cycle five or six years later. A generalised expansion of primary education is necessary but not sufficient to meet these targets, since girls face gender-specific discrimination and disadvantage at every step along the way. Action must be taken now to remove these barriers.

However, no country is so far behind on girls' enrolment that it could not at least eliminate gender gaps in rural and urban school intake by 2005. This would enable all countries to reach parity between girls and boys throughout the primary cycle by 2011, and to stay on track for universal primary education (UPE) by 2015. The UPE goal also requires that the

school completion rate is 100 per cent for all children by 2015, so concerted efforts must be made, starting now, to eliminate the gender gaps in rural and urban completion rates (and thus dropout rates) across all grades. Eliminating differences in learning achievements between girls and boys is also essential, and all countries should set clear targets for this.

In order to meet the MDG education goals, rich countries would need to provide $5.6 bn per year. This may sound like a lot of money, but it's less than three days of global military spending, and about the same as what American parents spend on Barbie dolls for their daughters every year. Aid needs to be specifically targeted at countries where gender inequalities are greatest and where enrolments are particularly low.

With some 88 countries off track, the looming prospect of failure has caused some commentators to dismiss the 2005 gender equality target as unrealistic and over-ambitious. But the striking successes achieved by some of the world's poorest countries prove otherwise. As this report will document, many countries, including most of those in our study, have made dramatic progress in reducing gender

Figure 1: The MDGs: Unfinished Business

Goal	Achieved (%)
Poverty	0
HIV/AIDS	~18
Child Mortality	~22
Basic education	~24
Gender Malnutrition	~24
Maternal mortality	~24
Safe Water	~47

Legend: ■ Achieved ■ To be achieved

Axis: 0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%
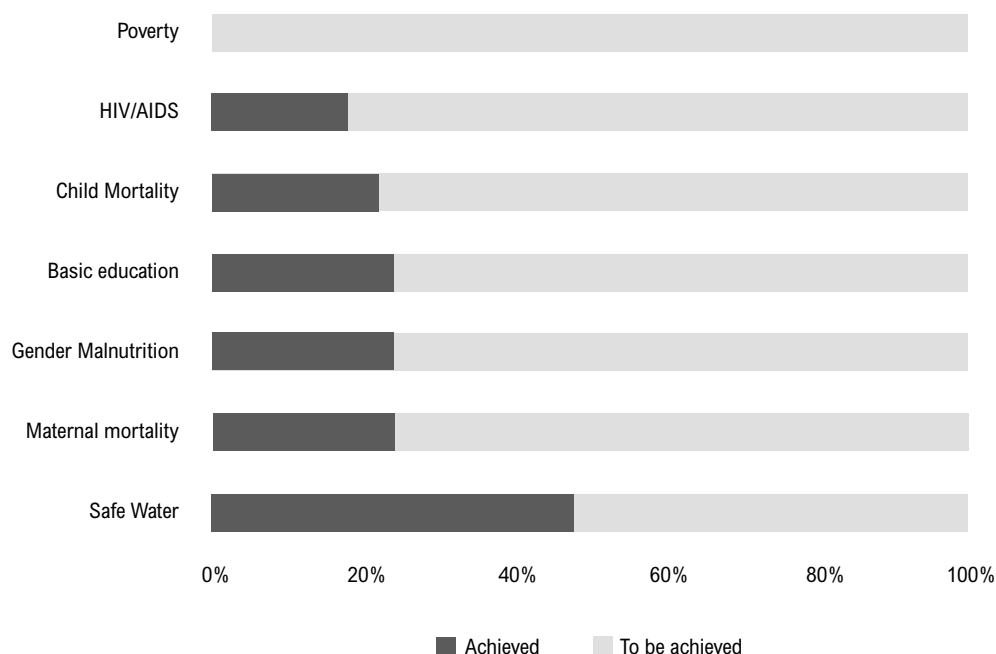
Source: UNDP

inequality and expanding overall access at both the primary and secondary school levels during the last decade. There is no practical reason why others cannot emulate their success if both governments and donors are ready to commit the resources and leadership needed. *The problem is not over-ambition, but lack of ambition.*

While most countries can point to a plethora of gender equity initiatives, too often these add up to a scatter-shot patchwork of 'girls' projects' rather than a comprehensive package of interventions backed by clear policy aims. A lack of country leadership, the competing and changeable priorities of aid donors, and reluctance to allocate more than token resources, all share part of the blame. But if the dismal progress rates in many countries have any lesson to teach, it is that even the best initiatives make little impact as stand-alone interventions. This was neatly illustrated by a story from one of our case study countries, where

a laudable initiative to provide separate latrines for girls has resulted in the construction of many toilets, which unfortunately are almost all kept permanently locked by the headteachers.

Gender inequality in education, like gender inequality in the wider society, has multiple causes, which tend to keep reinforcing one another unless integrated efforts are made to tackle all of them. Contrary to conventional wisdom, parents' resistance is seldom the most important factor behind low female enrolments. Studies have shown that parents are quick to recognise the importance of education for girls in today's changing world. But their desire to send their daughters to school is often quashed by factors such as prohibitive costs of schooling, failure to protect girls from sexual harassment and abuse in or on the way to school, and failure to provide an adequate number of classrooms and school places within a distance that is socially acceptable for girls to

travel on their own. As Sukhiya Yadav's story illustrates, such policy failures in turn help to perpetuate social customs that militate against girls' education, such as early marriage.

Sukhiya, a mother from the Terai region of Nepal, married off three of her four daughters before they were 12. But times have changed, and seeing other people in the village sending their daughters to school, Sukhiya wanted to educate her youngest daughter. Now the daughter is 14 and has passed the fifth grade… but [she] cannot continue going to school because the secondary school is far away and it is not proper for an adolescent girl to be sent such a distance. And her marriage will be a very expensive proposition because it takes more dowry to get older girls married. "In my zeal to educate my daughter I have brought devastation to my family because now I'll have to sell off all my land to pay the dowry for her wedding," Sukhiya laments (CWIN 1995, quoted in Tomasevski 2003:160–161).

The success stories among our case study countries have several factors in common. In particular, they have discarded the project-by-project approach in favour of comprehensive plans to tackle all of the main factors keeping girls out of school. The success of these ambitious initiatives has been guaranteed by high level political support, organised backing from powerful women and other gender advocates and civil society organisations within the country, the participation of key education stakeholders including teachers and communities, serious resource allocations, and, in the case of most low-income countries, sustained and coordinated donor support. In several of our case study countries, political commitment to girls' education was closely linked to wider struggles to empower women and overcome gender injustice. Girls' education targets gained momentum and profile as a result of these struggles. Moreover, programmes specifically aimed at increasing the enrolment of girls have been most effective when they are accompanied by a nationwide push to expand access for all children, for example by removing school fees, constructing more schools and hiring more teachers. As long as education

opportunities are costly or in short supply, access will continue to be 'rationed', with those who are wealthy, urban and male at the front of a very long queue. In order to release the pent-up demand for girls' education, governments need to commit themselves to both rapidly reducing the overall size of the education queue, and to affirmative measures (such as subsidies and incentives) to ensure that girls move up the queue.

Report objectives

The main purpose of this report is to inform campaigning and advocacy work in the North and South on girls' education. The report highlights the progress that has been made in reducing gender gaps in education in the developing world and the size of the challenge that remains. It has been coordinated by three member organisations of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE): Oxfam International, ActionAid, and ASPBAE (Asian-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education), with additional assistance from FAWE (Forum of African Women Educationalists) and funding from the UK Department for International Development. Nine country studies (four African and five Asian) were specially commissioned to provide up to date information on progress that is being made in low-income developing countries. In each country, key officials and other stakeholders were interviewed and all readily available statistical information and other relevant documentation was reviewed. The findings of the country studies were reviewed at a three-day workshop in London in February 2003, which was funded by the Commonwealth Education Fund.

Nicola Swainson was the coordinator of the project. She prepared the final report with the assistance of Paul Bennell, Anne Jellema, Ines Smyth and Nadine Evers. Nitya Rao provided consistent support throughout the project. Pauline Rose and Ramya Subrahmanian gave useful advice at the outset of the research. The authors of the country reports are: Ahmedullah Mia (Bangladesh), Kurt Bredenburg, Ma Chan Sohep and Om Somany (Cambodia), Yelfign

Work (Ethiopia), Vimila Ramachandran (India), Felicia Onibon (Nigeria), Linda Semu (Malawi), Maria Keita and Debby Fredo (Mali), Saloni Singh (Nepal), Seema Pervez (Pakistan).

Report structure

Chapter 1 assesses the current size of the gender gaps, focusing in particular on the current situation in the nine case study countries. It also reviews the progress made since the Jomtien Conference in 1990 when the first set of EFA goals were first promulgated.

Chapter 2 looks at the main reasons why so many fewer girls than boys attend school, and why they often do less well in terms of key learning outcomes. It explores the multiple economic, social, and cultural obstacles facing girls who want to go to school.

Chapter 3 reviews what governments and NGOs supported by donor partners have done to close the gap.

Chapter 4 focuses on the size of the challenge, and what needs to be done by governments, NGOs, and donors to attain the gender equality goals by 2005.

Chapter 5 presents a set of recommendations at various levels, in the conviction that ambitious and coordinated interventions give a fair chance to girls and boys, as well as the opportunity to release the promise that education offers for all.

1. How big are the Education Gender Gaps?

Accurately assessing the extent of gender inequality in primary and secondary education in developing countries is clearly crucial. However, this is not an easy task because the quality and coverage of the available statistics is so poor in many countries. This is particularly the case for key performance indicators such as pupil dropout and enrolment rates, and the most recent data is two to three years old. The overall quality of information collected through questionnaires from schools is notoriously poor. Other sources of data (household surveys, for example) can be used. However, efforts by government to improve gender-disaggregated educational monitoring are a minimum indicator that political will exists to tackle educational inequalities.

UNESCO is working with Ministries of Education to improve statistical capacity, but this will take time. The most recent year for which comprehensive enrolment information is available is 2000. This is clearly unsatisfactory, especially because we know that substantial progress towards achieving the gender enrolment parity goals has been made in many countries during the last three years.

The enormous gap between female and male literacy rates in much of Africa and South Asia is the most striking consequence of the gender inequalities in education. Figure 2 presents these literacy rates for the case study countries.

Box 2: Gender inequality indicators for education

There are three main aspects or dimensions to gender equality in education. The main focus of the gender inequality MDGs for education is **enrolment parity**. Gender parity is achieved when the same proportion of girls and boys in the primary and secondary school age groups are enrolled in school. The main indicator that is used to measure this is the difference or gap in female and male gross enrolment ratios (GER) for each education cycle. The female GER for primary education is the number of girls officially enrolled in primary school in a particular year expressed as a percentage of the total number of girls who should be attending primary school. Another key enrolment parity indicator is the gap in female and male intake rates. The gross intake rate for boys, for example, is the number of boys actually enrolling in school in any one year expressed as a percentage of the total number of boys who should be beginning their primary schooling in that year. As a flow measure, the intake rate is particularly useful because it shows the extent to which gender equality is being achieved in recent years, whereas the GER gap measures the gender enrolment inequality over the entire education cycle (usually six years for primary education).

The second key aspect of gender equality in education concerns the extent to which girls have the same level of **educational attainment** as boys, in terms of numbers of years, or grades of education, that have been completed. Total enrolments may be the same for girls and boys, but if far fewer girls complete their primary or secondary education because they have much higher dropout and repetition rates, then it is clear that educational outcomes are not the same with respect to gender. There are three key indicators of educational attainment, namely the percentages of young people (15-19) who have never enrolled in school (the never-attenders), those who complete primary school, and those who complete some or all of the secondary education cycle. Gender differences in school attendance are also very important. High rates of absenteeism obviously affect learning and usually result in students dropping out.

Actual **learning outcomes** is the third dimension of gender inequality. For many reasons, girls in the majority of developing countries end up learning less than boys in school. However, there is usually very little information available that measures learning outcomes with any degree of accuracy. Examination performance is an obvious indicator, but there are no international statistics collected for primary school leaving tests or secondary school terminal examinations.

Figure 2: Adult literacy rates in the case study countries, 2000 (percentages)

Country	Female	Male
Ethiopia	31	47
Mali	16	36
Malawi	47	75
Nigeria	56	72
Bangladesh	30	49
India	45	68
Nepal	24	59
Pakistan	28	57
Cambodia	57	80
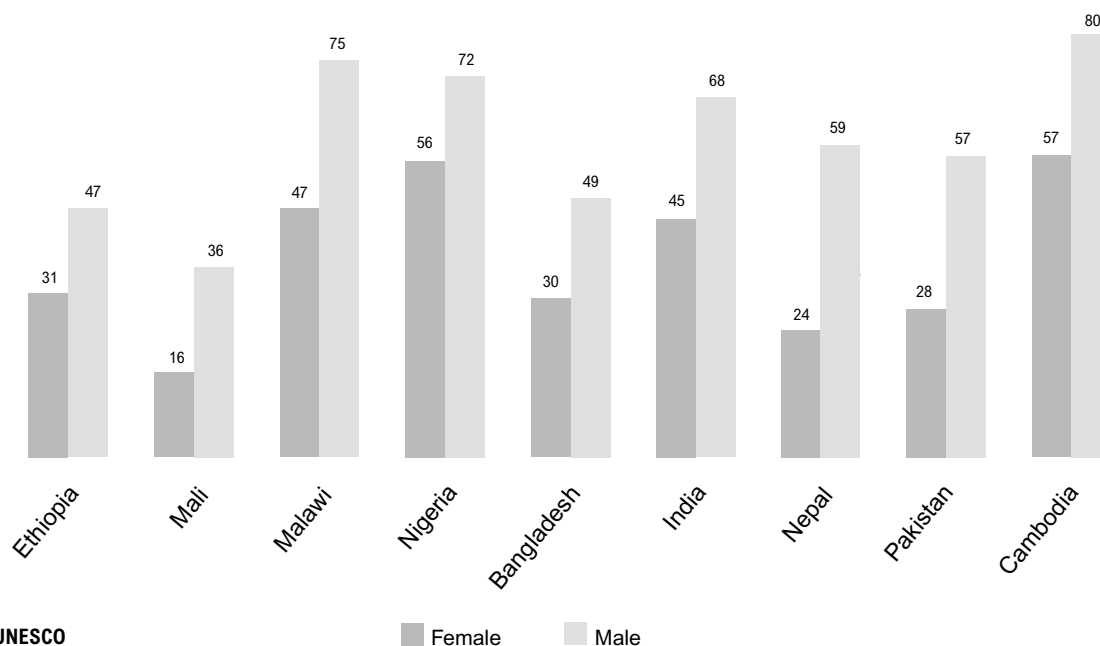
Source: UNESCO   ■ Female   □ Male

Enrolment ratios

On a regional basis, gender inequality in both primary and secondary education is worst in South and West Asia, closely followed by Sub-Saharan Africa. Female enrolments in primary schools in both these regions were around 75–90 per cent of male enrolments in 1999/2000 (see Figure 3). East Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean have almost attained gender enrolment parity for both primary and secondary education. While access to early childhood care and education (ECCE) is very low in most developing countries, girls and boys seem to be just about equally disadvantaged at this level (see Annex 2 table 6).

Not surprisingly, however, these aggregate figures mask enormous variation in gender enrolment inequality among the countries in each of these very large and diverse regions. Countries have been grouped in Table 1 according to the size of the percentage point gap between female and male gross enrolment ratios for primary schooling in 1999/2000. The case study countries are shown in bold type. This gap is disturbingly large (i.e. more

Figure 3: Gender parity index, 1990–2000

Region	Primary	Secondary
Sub-Saharan Africa	89	85
Middle East and North Africa	88	92
South and West Asia	75	75
East Pacific and Pacific	100	94
Latin America and Caribbean	98	99

Primary   **Secondary**

□ Sub-Saharan Africa   ■ Middle East and North Africa
■ South and West Asia   ■ East Pacific and Pacific
■ Latin America and Caribbean
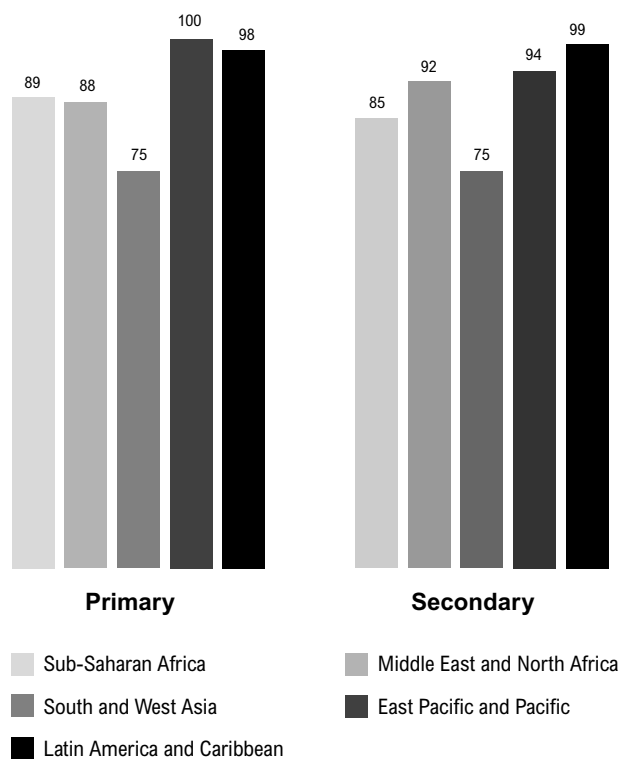
Source: UNESCO

Table 1: GER gender gaps for primary education 1999/00 (percentages)

	GIRLS> BOYS	BOYS>GIRLS				
		0 to 5	5 to 10	10 to 20	20 to 29	>30
South and West Asia		**Bangladesh** Sri Lanka		**India**	**Nepal**	**Pakistan** Afghanistan ?
Sub-Saharan Africa	Botswana Lesotho **Malawi** Mauritius Namibia Rwanda Tanzania	DRC Gabon Kenya Madagascar South Africa Zimbabwe	Angola Gambia Ghana Sierra Leone Sudan Swaziland Uganda Zambia	Burkina Faso Burundi Cameroon Comoros Eritrea **Mali** Niger **Nigeria** Senegal	CAR Cote d'Ivoire Eq. Guinea **Ethiopia** Guinea Mozambique Togo	Benin Chad Guinea Bissau Liberia
Middle East and North Africa	Bahrain	Iran Jordan Kuwait Lebanon Mauritania Oman Saudi Arabia UAE	Algeria Egypt Tunisia	Djibouti Morocco	Iraq	Yemen
East Asia and the Pacific	China South Korea	Indonesia Malaysia Mynamar Philippines	PNG Vietnam	**Cambodia** Lao		
Latin America and the Caribbean	Argentina El Salvador Nicaragua	Bolivia Chile Colombia Costa Rica Ecuador Mexico Panama Paraguay Peru Venezuela Uruguay	Brazil	Guatemala		

Source: UNESCO

Table 2: GER gender gaps for secondary education 1999/00 (percentages)

REGION	GIRLS>BOYS <10	5 to 10	0 to 5	BOYS>GIRLS 0 to 5	5 to 10	>10
South and West Asia			**Bangladesh**			**India**
						Nepal
			Sri Lanka			**Pakistan**
Sub-Saharan Africa	South Africa	Botswana	Swaziland	Angola	Gabon	Benin
	Sudan	Lesotho		Burkina Faso	Gambia	Chad
		Namibia		Burundi	Ghana	Cote d'Ivoire
				Cameroon	Liberia	DRC
				Comoros	**Malawi**	Eritrea
				Ethiopia	**Mali**	Guinea
				Kenya	Mozambique	Ginea Bissau
				Madagascar	**Nigeria**	
				Mauritius	Senegal	
				Niger	Zambia	
				Rwanda	Zimbabwe	
				Sierra Leone		
				Tanzania		
Middle East and North Africa	Qatar	Lebanon	Algeria	Oman	Egypt	Iran
	UAE		Bahrain	Syria	Iran	
			Djibouti		Mauritania	
			Jordan		Morocco	
			Kuwait		Saudia Arabia	
			Tunisia			
East Asia and the Pacific		Malaysia	Thailand	Indonesia	**Cambodia**	Lao
		Philippines		Korea	China	
				Mynamar	PNG	
					Vietnam	
Latin America and the Caribbean	n/a					

than 20 percentage points) in 15 countries including Ethiopia, Pakistan, and Nepal. There are another 14 countries where it is between 10 and 20 percentage points, which include Cambodia, India, and Mali. Nearly half of the 29 countries where the GER gender gap was more than 10 percentage points are in French-speaking Africa. These countries are very poor and mainly rural, and repetition rates, especially in the early grades of primary school, are very high.

As discussed later, emphasis on achieving universal primary education should not be allowed to disguise the pressing importance of creating opportunities for girls at post-primary level. Gender enrolment inequality as measured by the gender parity index is considerably worse for secondary education (see Figure 3). The Middle East and North Africa region is an important exception. It is worse still at universities and other higher education institutions. However, the absolute GER gender gaps tend to be smaller at the secondary level than at the primary level because the enrolment rates for secondary education as a whole are lower, especially in the poorest countries. Table 2 shows that there were 13 countries where this gap was greater than 10 percentage points in 1999/2000. This includes India, Nepal and Pakistan. In contrast, relatively more females than males were attending secondary schools in Bangladesh.

Data on intake rates is missing for quite a number of countries. However, countries without data are the same group of French-speaking African countries that have the largest intake gender gaps (of over 10 percentage points) as well as Ethiopia (30 percentage points), India (23), and Yemen (25) (see Annex 2 table 1).

Educational attainment

Data from household surveys shows far more clearly than aggregate enrolments the devastating impact that the education gender gap has on individual lives. Educational attainment statistics from Demographic and Health Surveys in over 30 countries show that a very high proportion of young women living in rural

areas have never been to school – nearly two-thirds in Ethiopia and 28 per cent in India as recently as 1999. The gender gap among rural never-attenders is over 10 percentage points for 17 out of the 23 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and in South and West Asia where this survey data is available (Annex 2 table 2). There are nine countries where such a large gender gap exists with respect to urban non-attenders. Figure 4 shows the level of education attained by 15–19 year olds in the nine case study countries from the latest surveys.

There are enormous rural-urban disparities in female and male GERs in most countries. In Mali, for example, the capital Bamako has a female primary school GER of 125 per cent compared with only 20 per cent in remote regions such as Kidal and Mopti. The full attainment profiles for four of the case study countries are presented in Figure 5. These show very strikingly the size of the attainment gaps not only between women and men, but also between the urban and rural areas.

Primary school completion rates are also very low in many countries. This is especially the case for rural women in much of French-speaking Africa and, among the case study countries in Ethiopia, Mali, Nepal, and Pakistan. Barely one per cent of girls in their mid-late teens, who were living in rural Ethiopia in 2000, finished the full eight-year primary school cycle. The completion rate was only marginally better for rural boys (1.6 per cent). In India, fewer than half of rural females, but nearly two-thirds of rural boys, finished primary school in 1999. In contrast, in three countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Malawi, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe), most of East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America, and the Caribbean (including Brazil), completion rates among rural females are higher than for males.

Grade 9 attainment data gives a good indication of the relative number of female and male children who make the transition to secondary school. In a large majority of developing countries, only a very small percentage of children reach even the lower grades of secondary school. In two-thirds of countries in

Figure 4: Education attainment among 15–19 year olds in the case study countries, latest year available (percentages)

No Schooling

Female/Rural ■ Female/Urban ■ Male/Rural ■ Male/Urban

Completed Primary

Female/Rural ■ Female/Urban ■ Male/Rural ■ Male/Urban

Completed Grade 9

Female/Rural ■ Female/Urban ■ Male/Rural ■ Male/Urban
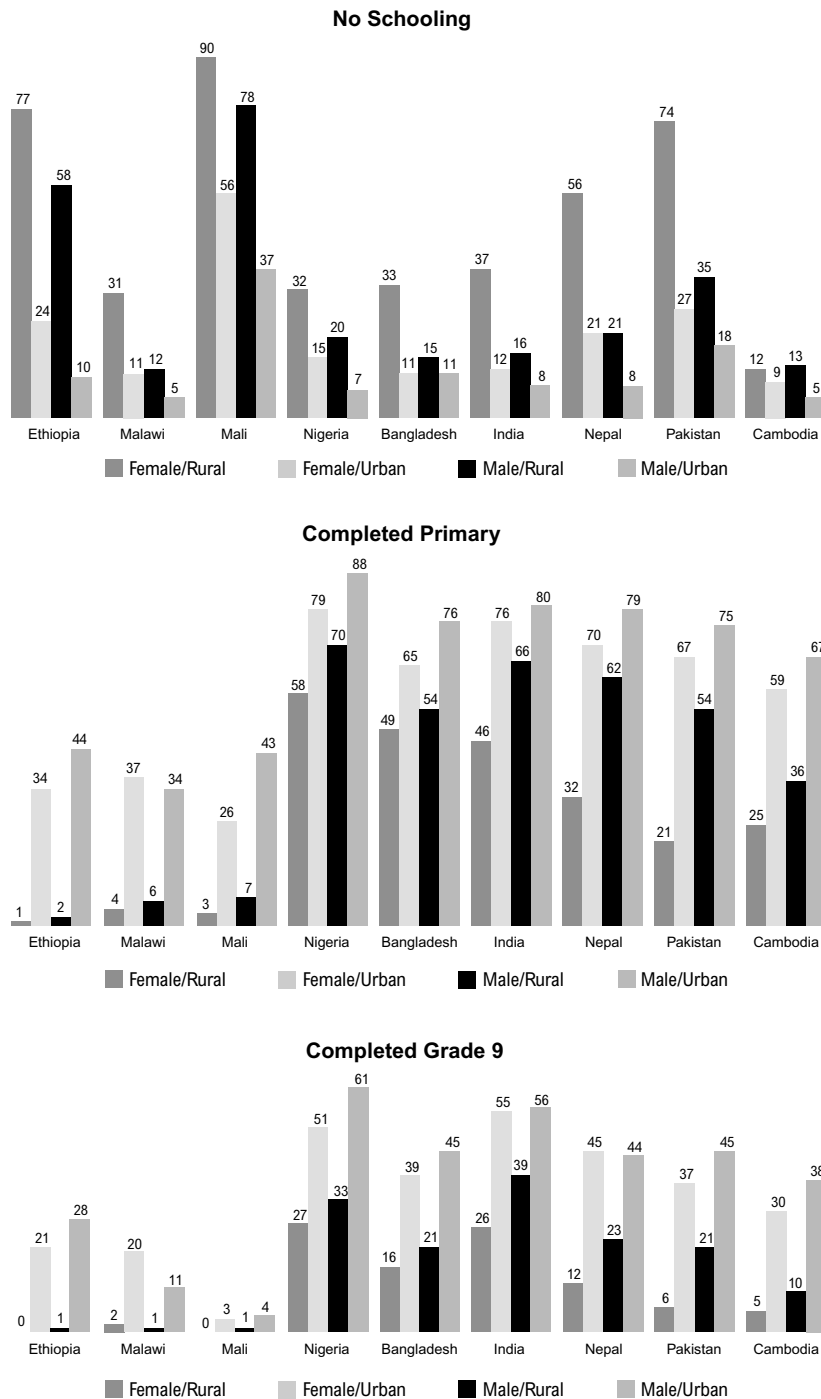
Notes: Survey dates are as follows: Bangladesh 1996/97, India 1999, Nepal 2001, Pakistan 1990, Cambodia 2000, Ethiopia 2000, Malawi 2000, Mali 1996 and Nigeria 1999.

Source: World Bank, educational attainment compiled from Demographic and Health Survey – Malawi 2000 data was kindly provided by Deon Filmer, World Bank.

Figure 5: Education attainment by grade among 15–19 year olds in Cambodia, Ethiopia, India and Malawi in 1999/2000

India 1999

Ethiopia 2000

→ Female/Rural   → Female/Urban
→ Male/Rural   → Male/Urban

Cambodia 2000

Malawi 2000

→ Female/Rural   → Female/Urban
→ Male/Rural   → Male/Urban

Sub-Saharan Africa, Grade 9 attainment rates for males are higher than they are for females. This differential is particularly large in urban Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, and Nigeria, as well as rural India and Pakistan.

In overall terms, among the 32 countries with survey data, nearly 40 per cent had acute, and another 12 per cent had moderate, gender attainment gaps. Gender differentials were in favour of females in one-quarter of these countries (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Degree of gender inequality with respect to basic education in developing countries
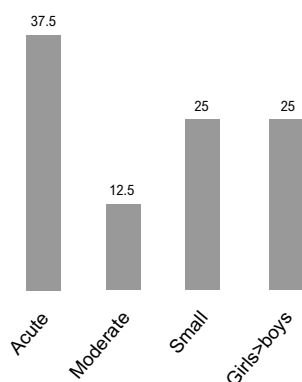
Notes: This classification is based on the six rural and urban gender gaps for no schooling, completed primary and completed grade 9. Countries where these gaps are above 50 are classified as having 'acute' gender inequality in education, 20–50 moderate and 0–20 small. DHS data from 32 countries is available.
Source: **Demographic and Health Surveys,** various.

Learning outcomes

In the past, the dominant international pattern was that boys generally did much better than girls in national examinations taken at the end of the lower secondary cycle (usually four years), especially in mathematics and science. Although the gender performance gap in primary school leaving examinations was much smaller, it still generally favored boys. However, case study countries show little uniformity in the pattern of examination outcomes with respect to gender. In Cambodia, primary school test results for 2001 show that whereas there are statistically significant differences between girls and boys in reading and mathematics in Grade 3, by Grades 4 and 5, boys did much better than girls in maths, but girls did somewhat better than boys in reading. At the secondary level, pass rates were much higher for girls than boys in the Grade 12 national examination. In Nepal, on the other hand, there were no significant differences in pass rates for any of the annual examinations at both primary and secondary levels (Grades 1–10). The same is true for the primary and secondary national examinations in Bangladesh. However, in Malawi, pass rates for the Malawi School Certificate Examination, which is taken at the end of Form Four, were much higher for males throughout the 1990s.

Box 3: Girls' Education in Mali

"I wish my brothers and sisters came to school. I don't think that staying away from school is good," says Moulayhata Walet Ibdadass. Moulayhata, who has been at school for five years, hopes to complete her education and one day run her own business. In Gao, northern Mali, girls like Moulayhata have been something of a rarity until recently. Educating girls is seen as a luxury. Currently only around 10 per cent of girls attend school and completion rates are lower still.

One of the reasons why Moulayhata has such high hopes of finishing her education is the work carried out by Taklitin Walet Farati, an NGO fieldworker. She talks to parents about the importance of girls' education and looks after the welfare of girls already attending school. The job is a challenging one. Taklitin has to tackle both the practical and cultural reasons behind girls' non-attendance at school.

The main practical obstacle is the long distances that girls have to walk alone to get to school, causing parents to fear for their daughters' safety. Gradually, with Taklitin's encouragement, parents have started to move closer to the school so that their daughters don't have as far to walk. But the opportunity costs of girls' education are a more formidable barrier, as Taklitin explains, "I'd go and check why girls weren't attending school, to be told by their mothers, 'We can't let our daughters go to school. We need them in the home. They are our hands and feet!'"

Taklitin tries to use the example of her own success to persuade parents that educating their daughters will pay off in the long term. "Because I'd had some education, I was able to get a job at an adult literacy centre and help my family." Taklitin's NGO reports some success in raising enrolments locally. However, poverty is so deep in this part of Mali that progress on girls' education will continue to be slow and patchy unless the government steps in with incentives or subsidies to compensate families for the time that girls need to spend studying instead of working.

Source: Mali Report

Table 3: GER gender gaps for primary education among the case study countries 1990–2000

	GIRLS			BOYS			GER GENDER GAP		GPI	
Country	1990	2000	Change	1990	2000	Change	1990	2000	1990	2000
Ethiopia	26.2	51.2	25	39	71.7	32.7	12.8	20.5	67	67
Malawi	61.8	158.3	96.5	73.8	157.9	84.1	12	0.4	84	100
Mali	19.4	55.5	36.1	33.5	77.3	43.8	14.1	21.8	58	72
Nigeria	77	77	0	87	95	8	10	22	89	81
Bangladesh	66.3	97	30.7	81	107.6	26.6	10.2	3	87	97
India	83.5	92.4	8.9	109.9	108.9	−1	26.4	16.5	76	85
Nepal	81.1	108.4	27.3	132.2	130.6	−1.6	51.2	22.2	61	83
Pakistan	39	73.9	34.9	81.5	116.7	35.2	42.5	42.8	48	63
Cambodia	78.4	84.2	5.8	90.8	89.7	−1.1	12.4	5.5	86	94

Note: Cambodia figures are net enrolment rates for 1996 and 2001. Reliable data prior to 1996 is not available.
Source: UNESCO

Progress since Jomtien

Although primary and secondary gender enrolment gaps are still unacceptably large, considerable progress has been made in reducing gender inequality in some countries since the Jomtien Conference in 1990. Looking at primary education in the nine case study countries, GER gender parity has been achieved in Malawi, and Bangladesh is almost there (see Table 3). There have been sizeable increases in the gender parity index in Mali, Nepal and Pakistan, but the GPI got worse in Nigeria and remained unchanged in Ethiopia. In India, it only

Figure 7: Change in GER gender gap among the case study countries 1990–1999/2000 (percentages)
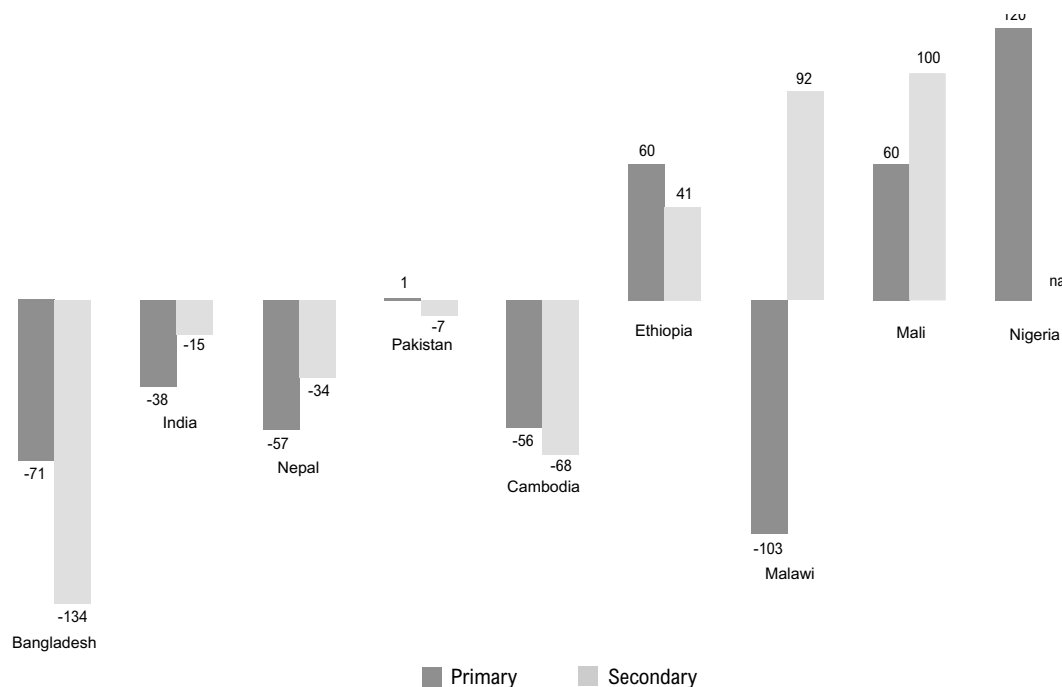
Source: UNESCO

Primary ■ Secondary

increased from 76 to 85. The absolute size of the primary GER gender gap has actually increased in Ethiopia and Nigeria. Nonetheless, the absolute increase in female enrolment rates in Ethiopia has been quite impressive in such a short period. The same is true for the other countries, with the exception of Nigeria, and to a lesser extent India and Cambodia. The jump in the female GER in Malawi – from 62 per cent in 1990, to 160 in 2000 – is truly spectacular and is an indication of the enormous pent-up demand that existed to educate all children in Malawi. Figure 7 shows the extent to which the GER gender gaps in these countries have changed in percentage terms. Expressed in this way, gender inequality has got worse in Ethiopia, Mali and Nigeria for both primary and secondary education and in Malawi for secondary education. However, with the exception of Nigeria,

there have been remarkable increases in female enrolment rates in these countries.

Looking at the developing world as a whole, there are a handful of other countries like Malawi that have eliminated the primary GER gender gap (Rwanda, Tanzania, China, Korea, El Salvador and Venezuela), but there are many more countries where progress has been much less (see Annex 2 table 4). At the regional level, the primary gender gap was halved in Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East and North Africa, and East Asia and the Pacific, but only by one-third in South and West Asia (see Table 4).

Much the same patterns are discernible with respect to secondary education among the case study countries (see Table 5 and Figure 7). Again, most progress has been made in Bangladesh and Malawi.

Table 4: GER gender gaps for secondary education among the case study countries 1990–2000

Country	GIRLS			BOYS			GER GENDER GAP		GPI	
	1990	2000	Change	1990	2000	Change	1990	2000	1990	2000
Ethiopia	12.5	4.2	–8.3	15.9	6.2	–9.7	3.4	2	79	68
Malawi	4.9	40	35.1	10.6	50	39.4	5.7	10	46	80
Mali	4.6	10.3	5.7	9.3	19.7	10.4	4.7	9.4	49	52
Nigeria	21.2			28.5			7.3		74	
Bangladesh	12.7	55.9	43.2	25.1	51.7	26.6	12.4	–4.2	51	108
India	32.9	40.2	7.3	55	58.9	3.9	22.1	18.7	60	68
Nepal	19.6	44.9	25.3	46	62.3	16.3	26.4	17.4	43	72
Pakistan	14.8	31.9	17.1	29.8	45.8	16	15	13.9	50	70
Cambodia	19.3	44.7	25.4	12.2	22.2	10	25.4	10	43	55

Source: UNESCO

Table 5: Change in the primary and secondary education gender parity index by region 1999–1999/00 (percentages)

Region	PRIMARY			SECONDARY		
	1990	2000	Change	1990	2000	Change
Sub-Saharan Africa	79	89	10	79	85	6
Middle East and North Africa	79	88	9	78	92	14
South and West Asia	75	84	9	61	75	14
East Pacific and Pacific	95	100	5	84	94	10
Latin America and Caribbean	98	98	0	104	99	–5

Source: UNESCO

Figure 8: Change in educational attainment among 15–19 year olds in four case study countries from 1990 to 1999/00

No Schooling

| Malawi | Nigeria | India | Nepal |

Malawi: -25, -12, -16, -7
Nigeria: -10, -2, -10, -1
India: -13, -6, -7, -2
Nepal: -15, -7, -4, -3

■ Female/Rural ■ Female/Urban ■ Male/Rural ■ Male/Urban

Completed Primary

| Malawi | Nigeria | India | Nepal |

Malawi: 10, 19, 6, 15
Nigeria: 13, 3, 18, 6
India: 10, 4, 4, 1
Nepal: 10, 8, 2, 5

■ Female/Rural ■ Female/Urban ■ Male/Rural ■ Male/Urban

Completed Grade 9

| Malawi | Nigeria | India | Nepal |

Malawi: 5, 17, 5, 12
Nigeria: 15, 7, 17, 20
India: 6, 2, 2, 0
Nepal: 0, -3, -6, 0

■ Female/Rural ■ Female/Urban ■ Male/Rural ■ Male/Urban

Source: Demographic and Health Surveys, various.

But, globally, only 13 countries out of a total of 80 for which data are available, managed to close the GER gender gap for secondary education (see Annex 2 table 4). With respect to the main geographical regions, good progress was made in the Middle East and North Africa, and East Asia and the Pacific. However, this was not the case in Sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia (see Table 5).

Many of the health and empowerment benefits of education are not unlocked until girls have progressed to secondary level. But barely over half of the girls in developing countries get beyond primary school. In Sub-Saharan Africa, only one in five girls are enrolled in secondary school – a figure that has barely budged since 1990, and in some countries has changed little since independence (UNESCO 2002). Girls' school attendance at age 12–13 is 80 per cent that of boys; but by age 18–19, only half as many girls as boys are attending school. The picture is slightly better in South and West Asia – about two in five attend secondary school – but female secondary enrolment is still only two-thirds of the male rate (UNFPA 2002).

In three countries in our study (Mali, Pakistan and Nepal), the median completion rate among girls is less than one year of primary education. Worldwide, girls aged 15–19 continue to lag well behind boys in school attainment, and progress on this indicator has been far less impressive than the growth in girls' primary enrolments (see Figure 8 and Annex 2, Table 2). This is partly because the expansion in primary school intakes occurred in most countries only from the mid-1990s onwards, so most of these children were still in primary school in 2000. The incidence of rural girls and women who had no schooling whatsoever only decreased by 10–15 percentage points in Nigeria, India and Nepal and only around 10 per cent more rural women successfully finished primary schooling by 2000 in these countries. This highlights the fact that it takes a long time to see positive results in education. Another major concern is that dropout rates do not necessarily fall as enrolments expand. In some countries where enrolment expansion has resulted in much lower educational quality, the numbers of drop-outs have not changed and may even have increased. For example, survival rates (to Grade 6) for rural girls increased only very slightly in Malawi and India during the 1990s and remained unchanged in Nepal. In Nigeria, though, they increased from 53 per cent to 81 per cent for rural girls between 1990 and 1999, and from 58 per cent to 64 per cent in Bangladesh in just three years – from 1994 to 1997.

Perhaps frightened by the looming prospect of failure to achieve the 2005 goal, some policymakers have attempted to shift the goalposts – redefining the target so that it only refers to numerical parity in primary school enrolments. We have seen in this chapter that the true dimensions of the 2005 challenge are much larger. Getting girls onto the first rung of the education ladder will make little lasting impact on gender equity, if girls find themselves pushed off the ladder as soon as they try to progress to the next rung. Governments and donors must focus on increasing completion and attainment rates among girls as well as raising their learning achievements. Achieving gender parity in year one primary intakes is a useful starting point, but governments need to commit themselves to a clear timeline and roadmap for progressing from numerical parity to a genuinely fair chance for girls in all dimensions of education.

2. Why do fewer girls go to school?

Girls face many barriers in their attempts to gain an education. In most developing countries, the private returns to girls' education – the economic benefits that families will receive – are usually much lower than the social returns, and also lower than the returns to boys' education. This conspires with other factors to encourage families to give priority to boys' schooling. The poorer the family, and the more difficult and costly it is for them to send children to school, the more likely girls are to be squeezed out by this logic.

The precise causes and consequences of gender inequality in basic education obviously vary from country to country, but there is a common set of constraints that have to be tackled. The most important of these are:

- Endemic poverty.
- Schooling costs.
- The burden of household labour.
- Shortage of school facilities, especially in rural areas.
- Negative and even dangerous school environments.
- Cultural and social practices that discriminate against girls, including early marriage and restrictions on female mobility.
- Limited employment opportunities for women.

Despite impressive progress in increasing primary and secondary enrolments for girls, gender inequalities persist in both primary and secondary schooling in nearly all of the case study countries. A variety of factors from home, community, and school, determine educational outcomes. Girls, however, face additional obstacles in enrolling and attending school. These have been divided into three groups in Table 6.

Girls are trapped in a vicious circle. Because they face such difficulties in doing well at school, many of them struggle to complete their education and to pass key national examinations. As a result, their parents are less inclined to invest heavily in their education.

Phulmani's story highlights how endemic poverty is keeping girls from realising their full potential at school.

Son preference

Cultural and social beliefs, attitudes and practices prevent girls from benefiting from educational opportunities to the same extent as boys. There is often a powerful economic and social rationale for investing in the education of sons rather than daughters. In most countries, formal employment in

Table 6: Key constraints affecting girls' education – a view from India

Systemic issues	Content and process of education	Economy, society and culture
Access problems. Dysfunctional schools. Poor quality schools. Lack of teacher motivation. Inflexible education provision. Calendar and timings.	Gender stereotyping. Perpetuation of gender bias. Relevance of curriculum. Language issues. Lack of joyful learning. Lack of access to books, magazines, papers, etc. Lack of appropriate reading material for the newly literate.	Poverty/powerlessness. Status of women. Cost to family. Child labour/domestic chores. Battle for survival. Self-perception. Child marriage.

Source: Ramachandran 1998.

Box 4: Phulmani's story

Phulmani is eight years old. She stays with her family in a village in south-east Nepal. She belongs to the community of mushar – 'the mice eaters'. Her family is considered 'untouchable' and they live as landless squatters on government land or on the periphery of the landlord's farm. Her father and mother are agricultural laborers. They survive on the grain that they get as compensation for the harvesting, winnowing and stacking of grain.

Children start working from an early age. In fact, as soon as they are able to walk, they are assigned duties. The younger children work either as domestic servants, or help with carrying firewood, grazing the goats and cattle and taking the midday meal to their parents in the field.

There are nine people in Phulmani's family. She started school with the help of a local NGO, but she stopped attending because her parents could not afford the school books that she must buy. The costs of the books are reimbursable, but her parents do not know about this. Her community faces another problem in educating its children. Most are not citizens and do not therefore have birth certificates that are required in order to enrol in school. The upper castes and local landlords who control the government bureaucracy are opposed to them obtaining citizenship because they fear that this will enable them to buy land and free themselves from their abject status as bonded laborers.

Phulmani says "My father has been trying to find the money to buy my school books". But her parents are more determined to send their second son to school. When asked how will she manage the money for his education, Phulmani's mother says, "I will try all means, after all – he is a son." She says her husband is happy that she has produced a son after three daughters.

Her other sister, Bucchi also no longer attends school because she must stay at home to cook, clean and look after the younger ones while her mother is away at work. Phulmani's eldest sister is married. She is 18 years old and has a two and a half year old son. She encourages Phulmani to study and wishes that she too had had the chance.

Source: Nepal report

both the public and private sectors continues to be dominated by men. Consequently, the chances of a young woman, especially from a poor rural background, finding a 'good job' remain extremely limited. In Ethiopia, for example, only 18 per cent of senior officials and managers, and 25 per cent of technical and associated professionals, are women (Rugh 2000). Boy preference is most acute in South Asian countries, where sons remain 'in the family' and are expected to support them in their old age, whereas daughters marry, normally in their mid to late teens, and become members of another family. Parents in Mali also commonly regard girls' education as a 'lost investment' because it is the future husband's family who reaps the returns, not them.

More generally, highly unequal gender relations strongly militate against the education of girls. 'In a patriarchal system where the man decides everything and the woman listens or accepts orders, it will be difficult to decide together as to who should go to school... Children's voices are not heard nor are they allowed to give their opinion, especially if they are girls' (Ethiopia report).

However, it is important to emphasise that parental decision making with regard to schooling is complicated and multidimensional. Their preferences can change fast when the direct and indirect costs of educating girls drop considerably. Egyptian parents who claimed strong resistance to girls' education changed their minds almost overnight when schools were conveniently constructed nearby (Rugh 2000: 13). In Pakistan, poor parents are fond of quoting a saying that it is pointless to 'put gasoline into someone else's car' (Ruqhia Jafri in Ramachandran 1998). However, recent surveys in the highly 'conservative' provinces of North West Frontier and Baluchistan show that the same parents increasingly aspire for both sons *and*

daughters to get a good enough education to become doctors, civil servants, teachers and business people. What was assumed to be parental opposition to girls' education, turned out to be a lack of accessible and affordable education opportunities: in North West Frontier Province until quite recently, more than 40 per cent of villages had no government-funded schools that were open to girls (Rugh 2000: 15).

Parents' attitudes also change fast when the private returns to girls' education increase (as a result of employment opportunities opening up for women, or as a result of incentive programmes which 'pay' parents for keeping their daughters in school). The rapid expansion of the textile industry in Bangladesh and Cambodia while not a panacea for improving women's status, has had a positive impact on girls' education in both countries. In Africa, although the overall impact of recent economic reforms on women is controversial, there has been growth in sectors such as tourism and financial services, which employ relatively large proportions of women. At the same time, male-dominated skilled manual employment has contracted in many countries as a result of economic liberalisation and de-industrialisation (Al Samarrai and Bennell 2003).

However, most developing countries made only limited progress in expanding female employment opportunities during the 1990s. Given the very direct link between education and obtaining a good job, this has been a major disincentive for parents to educate girls. The main problem is that wage employment is growing far too slowly. As long as this situation persists, incentives or subsidies to parents will have a crucial role to play in increasing girls' enrolment and completion. Such measures are economically sound since gains in women's education have a direct role to play in increasing the rate of economic growth.

Early marriage

The low value attached to girls' education reinforces early marriage, and vice-versa. In the late 1990s, the median age of marriage in Malawi was 17.1, Mali 16.1, Nepal, 16.5 and Nigeria 17.2 (Demographic and Health Surveys, various). In Nepal, 40 per cent of girls are married by the age of 15. Too often, marriage is seen as a higher priority than education. In Mali, for example, 'parents' unwavering expectations of marriage for their girls is combined with cultural traditions that the woman enters into her husband's family upon marriage and, is in many ways, 'lost' to her parental family. Indeed, the prevailing social and cultural norms for girls prepare them for adult lives as wives and mothers' (Mali report).

The mean age of marriage in Ethiopia is 15.6. However, in some parts of rural Ethiopia, girls as young as five or seven years of age are 'betrothed' and sent to live with their 'in-laws'. These girls either do not get to school at all, or have to stop their education in order to work in the home of their husband and his family. In Ethiopia, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) has launched a campaign to return such girls to their birth families and get them enrolled in school. In order to counter such practices, the legal age of majority has been raised from 15 years to 18 years. But this will not be easy to implement given the entrenched cultural traditions surrounding marriage. Due to overage enrolment and late entry, girls are often still in primary school when they are expected to marry. And having children at a young age also seriously affects both their health and their future employment prospects.

However, marriage does not always work against girls' education. For example, where the girl's family receives dowry or bride price (as in many parts of Africa), then there are incentives to educate daughters. And in Muslim countries such as Bangladesh, where girls are no longer secluded and most are attending school, being educated can, in some circumstances, help to 'secure' a husband from a higher social class. In the Punjab in Pakistan,

however, the necessity to give dowry impedes education since some families would either save money for their daughter's dowry or education.

In some African countries, girls are absent from school in order to participate in circumcision ceremonies in preparation for marriage. Many parents also withdraw their daughters from school because local and national authorities are failing to protect girl pupils from sexual abuse, creating a very real fear of their becoming pregnant or contracting HIV. A significant proportion of female dropout in the higher grades of secondary school is due to pregnancy in many countries, especially in Eastern and Southern Africa.

It is important however not to overstate cultural and social constraints. All cultures are changing, especially as they come under growing pressures from outside influences. If the incentives are right (in terms of costs and facilities), then girls will be sent to school. Parental resistance to sending their daughters to school on the grounds of culture can be overcome *if* schooling is of a reasonable quality and schools themselves are not too far away and are safe.

School is too expensive

The direct costs of sending all children to school are usually too high for poor parents. While primary school tuition fees have now been abolished in many countries, nearly all developing countries still require parents to pay charges of various kinds – in many cases, these charges are far more hefty than the tuition fees. These include books, stationery, exam fees, uniforms, contributions to 'building funds', levies imposed by the school management committees, informal 'tips' to teachers, and travel costs.

- In Tanzania, prior to the removal of school fees, it cost about half of the annual income of poor rural families to send a child to primary school for one year. Simple arithmetic shows that poor families would be unable to send more than one child to school. Tuition fees alone cost one month's salary, but other expenses – notably uniforms, exam fees, books and stationery – were even steeper (Penrose 1998: 104 and Watkins 2000: 178).

- Secondary school tuition fees alone still cost Tanzanian families the equivalent of three months' minimum wage (Tomasevski 2003).

- Parents in 234 villages in rural India cited 'unaffordability' as the single most important factor keeping children out of school. The cost of educating a single child was equivalent to 40 days' wages for an agricultural laborer (PROBE 2000).

- In Nepal, the poorest 20 per cent of households spend more than 40 per cent of their income to send one child to primary school.

Box 5: Fighting early marriage in Ethiopia – one girl's story

"I am 14 years old and in Grade 6 at primary school. I have two sisters and one brother and we all go to school. At the time I was about to be married, my school friends were laughing and whispering and I did not know why they did that. At last, I suspected that something was going on and asked my parents. They could not tell me. I heard it from my friend. I told my parents not to do it and not to send me for marriage. They told me they would write a letter to cancel the marriage. Nonetheless that was not true. They cheated me. They were buying a lot of food items. They told me it was for home use. At last I told this to my teachers and when they heard it from my parents that the last preparation was already done, my teachers advised me that I can still continue my lessons after marriage. After 12 days of my marriage I wanted to go back to school, but my in-laws refused. They had promised that I would go to school after marriage. They broke their promise. I left them and came back to school and to my parents' home. I am now a good student. I got good marks in my test. I like English and Science and I want to be a doctor in the future."

Source: Ethiopia report

Fees and charges for education have been shown to affect girls' chances to learn, far more than boys. Fees undermine demand for girls' education by adding to the already high opportunity costs of sending girls to school (see below). Particularly when employment prospects for girls are very limited, the willingness of parents to find the money to meet these costs is understandably low. In Kenya, following the introduction of cost-sharing policies, a study of seven districts found that girls were twice as likely as boys to be withdrawn from school on cost grounds (Watkins 2000:181; see also Gertler and Glewwe 1992). Girls' costs may also be significantly higher than boys if uniforms are required: one study in Guinea found that the annual cost of primary education was $2 more for girls out of a total average of $18 (Miske and Prouty 1997).

School is not compulsory

In most countries, primary education is compulsory by law, but this is rarely enforced. Therefore, parents are free to decide whether or not to send their children to school.

UN Special Rapporteur Katarina Tomasevski points out that there is a powerful human rights rationale for making education compulsory. She argues that compulsory education laws impose strong obligations on governments to provide a functioning country-wide education system; to make education free and to provide social assistance to parents who cannot otherwise afford the indirect costs (transport, meals, etc.) of fulfilling their legal obligation to send children to school (Tomasevski 2003: 24–25). Compulsory education is also important in tackling child labour, as the legally mandated length of compulsory education has long been linked to the minimum age of employment.

In Ethiopia, civil society groups are campaigning for a compulsory education law in the hope that this will strengthen the enforcement of existing legislation against early marriage. Where governments do provide free education, and extra assistance is

universally available to poor families to send children to school, as recommended elsewhere in this report, then there is a strong rationale for enforcing

Table 7: What poor girls in rural India do before and after school

Before going to school	Always	Sometimes	Rarely
Sweeping, cleaning the house	X		
Washing utensils and clothes	X		
Lighting the fire, cooking (eldest girl)	X		
Lighting the fire (younger siblings)			X
Fetching water	X		
In school			
Cleaning classrooms		X	
Spreading mats and putting them away		X	
Taking out tables/chairs, putting them back			X
Ringing the bell			X
Getting water for teachers / making tea		X	
After school			
Going straight home	X		
Wandering leisurely while returning home			X
Collecting fodder/ fuel wood	X		
Working in fields		Seasonal	
Collecting cow dung	X		
Fetching water	X		
Feeding the cattle	X		
Grazing cattle and goats		X	
Doing odd jobs in the fields		X	
Running errands			X
Studying			X
Cooking (eldest girl)	X		
Cooking (younger siblings)		X	
Sibling care	X		
Washing utensils	X		
Leisure time – playing, TV (urban area)		X	

Source: Educational Resource Unit, (India) forthcoming 2003.

compulsory education in order to combat lingering cultural and social discrimination against girls and other marginalised groups.
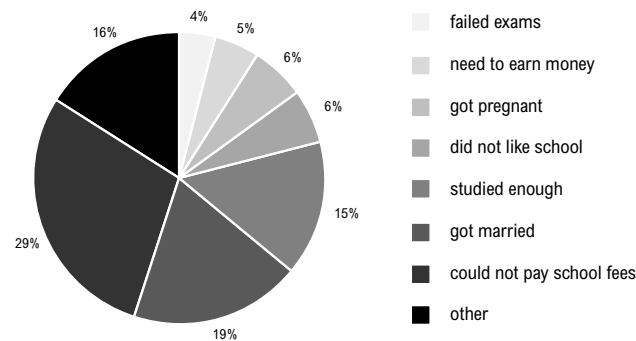
Girls have too much to do at home

'Needed at home' and/or 'need to earn money' are major reasons why poor girls dropout of school in most countries (see Figures 9 and 10). Opportunity costs refer to labour time lost to the parent when the child goes to school. These opportunity costs of schooling are usually much higher for girls than for boys, since girls are expected to do more domestic work than boys (see Table 7). By the age of 10, girls in Bangladesh and Nepal may be working up to 10 hours a day in productive activity inside and outside the home, while Ethiopian girls of primary age work for 14–16 hours a day (Watkins 2000: 191). A study in Egypt showed that girls do 85 per cent of the household chores given to rural children, whereas boys only do 15 per cent (Rugh 2000: 31).

Girls often have to walk long distances to fetch water and firewood as well as look after young siblings. In addition to their domestic chores at home, girls are expected to do work around the school, leaving very

Box 6:

Yamata lives in Delanta, Ethiopia. She is nine years old and has to collect water every day before she even thinks about going to school. It will take her about three hours to fetch the water at the nearest well. After school she is faced with more chores around the house, leaving little time to study. She is not alone. One girl talked about her difficulty, "After we get back from school we do many works at home and are so tired that we cannot even study." Girls in general will miss several days of school each week due to work. Division of labour in the household is one of many obstacles for girls not going to school.

"Girls are not given all the necessary support to go to school," said one teacher in Delanta. Yamata's situation is not unique.
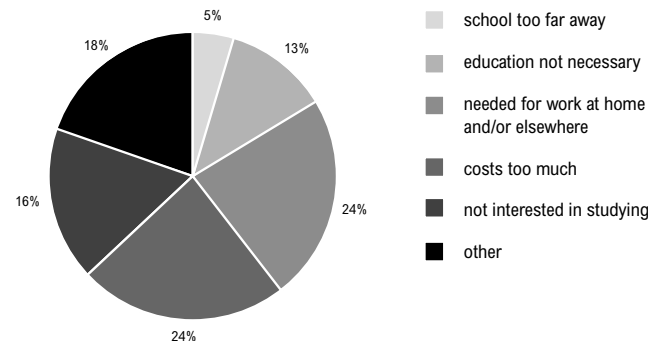
Source: Ethiopia report

little time to study and complete homework. They are often too exhausted to be able to concentrate in class. Sometimes girls and boys are able to juggle work at home with school, but attendance often suffers. In some cultural and economic settings, girls and boys have high rates of absenteeism. For example, if the harvest is underway, both boys and girls frequently take time off from school. For this reason, in rural areas, flexible timetables have been suggested. Official dropout rates would be a lot higher if the long periods absent from school were taken into consideration.

Figure 9: Reasons for never attending/dropping out of school among 6–17 year olds in India, 1999 (percentages)

- failed exams
- need to earn money
- got pregnant
- did not like school
- studied enough
- got married
- could not pay school fees
- other

Source: DHS from the India country report.

Figure 10: Reasons for never attending/dropping out of school among 6–17 year olds in Nigeria, 1999 (percentages)

- school too far away
- education not necessary
- needed for work at home and/or elsewhere
- costs too much
- not interested in studying
- other

Source: DHS from the Nigeria country report.

In Nepal, girls contribute at least 50 per cent more labour than boys. Their workload also increases with age; girls aged 10–14 years spend 3.5 hours per day, compared with 2.2 hours for boys. Out-of-school girls and boys in the same age group both work, on average, nearly 10 hours a day. It is usually for reasons of poverty that most of the families do not send their daughters to school.

However, in India, parents who have small farms place greater demands on their children's time than landless parents do. The amount and type of domestic work required of girls often depends on birth order. In India, it is common for older girls to be kept at home to look after younger siblings, and they often miss out on schooling altogether. There are very few Early Childhood Development Centres in the case study countries, which can help free older sisters from their childcare obligations.

In the context of HIV/AIDS in high prevalence countries in Africa, the burden of work at home for girls is particularly acute as they are increasingly required to stay at home to nurse sick relatives, look after siblings and do domestic tasks normally done by adults.

Government schools are too few and too far

In some parts of Malawi, children walk between 2.5 and 10km to school (Rugh 2000: 31). In Mali, the average distance to school exceeds 7km in rural regions compared with less than 1km in the capital region (Watkins 2000: 193–4). Providing enough schools in sparsely populated rural areas poses considerable financial challenges for governments, especially in large countries like Ethiopia with difficult communications and limited public transport. Nevertheless, World Bank analysis of household survey data shows that an increase in school facilities has a strong positive effect on the enrolment of children from poor families – probably because there simply aren't enough schools to meet demand in the areas where poor people live.

Ministry of Education planners don't always take girls' enrolment targets into consideration when determining how many schools should be built (whether by head of population or by geographical radius). The need to travel long distances to school is a particular barrier for girls, especially (but not only) in countries where a cultural premium is placed on female seclusion. For reasons of safety and security, most parents are reluctant to let their daughters walk long distances to school. What parents define as an acceptable distance for girls to travel varies from country to country. In Egypt, another study found that girls' enrolment dropped off sharply when schools were located more than 1.5km away, while in Pakistan the threshold was 1km (Rugh 2000: 31).

Distance can also add to the total cost of sending a child to school, and in that way can further reduce the likelihood that girls will get the same chance as boys to attend school.

In parts of Sub-Saharn Africa and South Asia, the compelling shortage of secondary school places has fuelled the expansion of private schools. Within the private and non-government sector, there is huge diversity in standards, location and quality. In most countries, private schools are supposed to be registered with the government, but this is not always the case. In many countries, particularly in South Asia, the burgeoning private sector has attracted mainly male students due to boy preference. In India, parents tend to regard private schools as being superior to government schools because they are more exam-oriented, have better teacher discipline, and English is the medium of instruction.

In some countries (including India and Nepal), the expansion of the private secondary school has resulted in expanded enrolments of girls in government secondary schools. Although the private sector is relieving governments of the burden of providing secondary education facilities, there is clearly a real concern that the rapid expansion of private education is creating a two-tiered system that entrenches

inequalities based on social class, caste and gender. In short, the encouragement of private education can actually undermine the attainment of gender and education objectives. A large and growing private education sector means that politically powerful middle class turn their backs on public education and are less prepared to lobby for key improvements, including gender equity, or to back the tax increases that will ultimately be needed to finance such improvements.

Schools fail to motivate or encourage girls

It is widely believed that the limited number of female teachers in both primary and secondary school is a major constraint to girls' education. The presence of female teachers tends to make schools more girl and boy-friendly and provide role models for girls. Alternative and community schools generally have a higher proportion of women teachers than government schools, perhaps because few or no qualifications are required.

Most countries in our study had long-standing quotas for the recruitment of women teachers, yet none had managed to fill these quotas (see Figure 11) – primarily because governments have failed to develop effective incentives to encourage female teachers to work in rural areas. Teacher deployment in some countries is so blatantly corrupt that it is impossible for rational and objective staffing practices to be adopted. Access for young women to teacher training colleges remains a major issue.

Nepal still has no women teachers in 40 per cent of primary schools. Likewise, the majority of single and two teacher schools in rural and remote areas of India have no female teachers. The Bangladeshi government established a quota of 60 per cent for women teachers in all primary schools in 1991 and relaxed teacher qualification requirements. However, the proportion of women teachers in primary and secondary government schools increased by only 10 per cent and five per cent during the 1990s. Across the developing world, typically less than one-quarter of primary school teachers are women (see Figure 11). In rural and remote areas, there are usually even fewer female teachers – just 15 per cent in Cambodia, for example. In Nepal, nearly two-thirds of primary school teachers in Kathmandu are women, but only 15 per cent in the Far West Region. This is despite the

Figure 11: Women teachers as a percentage of total primary school teachers, 1990 and 1999/00 (percentages)

Source: UNESCO   ■ 1990 ■ 1999/00
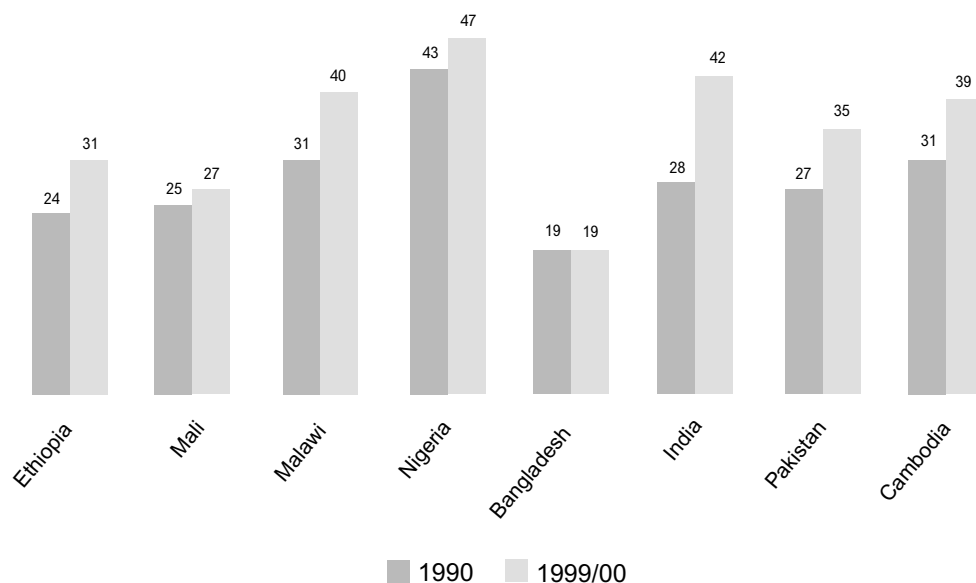
fact that it is official policy that every primary school has at least one female teacher. The proportion of female teachers in the upper grades of primary is also much lower than that of males. This reflects the failure of girls to make it through to secondary school and obtain teaching qualifications.

However, in male-dominated education systems, it is sometimes the case that some women teachers may themselves have negative attitudes about girls' abilities. Women teachers are themselves struggling with the burden of gender inequity which, in turn, perpetuates cycles of inequitable socialisation.

Considerable progress has been made in designing more gender-sensitive curricula. However, the use of textbooks with stereotypical images of women and men is still common in many countries. Women are consistently depicted solely as mothers and housewives, while men are portrayed in adventurous and decisive roles associated with breadwinners and property owners. In Peruvian textbooks, women simply disappear from view; they are mentioned ten times less often than men. A primary school language textbook in Tanzania includes the following description of a girl's leisure time (Tomasevski 2003: 169):

> Today is Saturday.
> You don't go to school on Saturday.
> You will work here, at home.
> First, you will wash your school uniform.
> After that, fetch the water.
> Then, you clean the compound.
> After we have finished eating, you will wash the dishes.
> Then you will go to the shop to buy sugar and rice.

Seven out of our nine country studies now have gender-sensitive curricula at primary level. But there have been numerous problems in ensuring that these new curricula are effectively delivered in the classroom, most especially a lack of textbooks and a fatal failure to involve teachers themselves in designing and implementing the reforms, or to provide additional training in how to teach the new curriculum. The challenge is not just transforming curriculum content, but also improving teacher training so that teachers are adequately equipped to deliver it. In most countries, not nearly enough has been done to redress serious gender biases in teacher practice, as well as in the management hierarchy within schools and education departments.

Finally, some experts argue that irrelevant content is a barrier to girls' education. Many rural communities complain that schools alienate children from traditional values and pursuits without providing marketable skills in their place. When the Ministry of Education in Mali engaged in a country-wide dialogue in the mid-1990s in order to find out what people wanted from the education system, they found that the 'rote learning culture' of public schools in Mali strongly discouraged girls from attending school. Parents also stressed that 'today when our children leave school they are not prepared to do anything' (Mali report).

The introduction of practical skills or locally-based material to the curriculum is certainly a long-standing policy aim in Africa and South Asia. There are some successful experiences: in Cambodia, for example, topics on integrated pest management been introduced into the curriculum with assistance from World Education and the Ministry of Agriculture in order to teach children about improved methods of growing environmentally safe rice. Although not targeted at girls exclusively, girls and boys are expected to participate equally (Cambodia report).

NGOs have powerfully demonstrated and advocated the need for education that enhances children's capacity and self-confidence to address real-life challenges. For girls, knowledge and self-belief in sexual and reproductive health matters can be transformative; in the context of the AIDS epidemic, it has become a life-and-death issue. But promoting awareness of students' rights as citizens and as women is equally important. Most fundamentally, as captured by the South Asian concept of 'joyful

learning', education perhaps does most to empower girls when it affords children the confidence to express themselves as individuals – an experience that is frequently denied to girls throughout the rest of their youth and socialisation. In the words of Sangeeta, a 16-year-old Indian girl: "I didn't go to school because I had so much work at home. Here at school, I am learning so much. *I am learning to think well of myself.* I want to become a teacher, so that I can make others feel like me now" (UNICEF 2000).

Schools fail to protect the basic rights and dignity of girls

Schools in most countries are not girl-friendly and in some cases, they are even hazardous for girls. Schoolgirls suffer sexual harassment, bullying and other forms of intimidation, sometimes even rape; these abuses too often meet with silence and inaction from local and national authorities. In large classes there is not much effective learning, this is compounded by gender bias in the curriculum and the fact that girls are often expected to spend time sweeping the classroom, tending the teacher's vegetable garden, or even making tea for the teachers, rather than studying. Traditional attitudes towards the social roles of women often dominate in the classroom and in the interpretation of the curriculum. The dominance of males in wider society is usually mirrored in the management and organisation of the school

In some countries, including large parts of India, gender segregation persists in the classroom. Teachers also routinely use biased language that reinforces class, caste and gender distinctions. Research has shown that children from poor and lower caste backgrounds are particularly discriminated against and sometimes subject to beatings and forms of verbal abuse (Subrahmaniam 2003, Ramachandran 2003). This is not helped by

the fact that most teachers in India come from upper castes.

Teachers frequently pay more attention in class to boys than girls. A study in Nigeria showed that while positive interactions between teacher and student were almost equally divided between boys and girls in the early years of schooling, by the sixth grade, teachers were significantly more positive towards boys than girls, and boys also took more of teachers' time than girls (Rugh 2000: 57). This type of behaviour tends to perpetuate the already low self-image of many young girls. Bullying by older children is common in many schools. Faced with such difficult and hostile environments, it is not surprising that many girls drop out because they 'did not like school' (see Figure 9).

Failure to provide adequate physical facilities, like toilets and running water, is an inconvenience for boys, but a disaster for girls. During menstruation, most girls will not attend school if there are not basic toilet facilities. Also, sexual harassment can occur unless separate toilets for girls and boys are provided. Yet, one-third of public schools in Nepal have no separate toilets for girls. Even in the DPEP states of India, only 30 per cent of schools have proper toilets. Even when toilets have been built, they are often poorly serviced and maintained.

The long list of constraints that result in sizeable gender gaps in many countries looks very formidable and daunting. Surely it is not possible to tackle the underlying causes of these inequalities in just a few years? However, a number of countries, including Bangladesh and Malawi, have made remarkable progress during the last decade or so in increasing girls' enrolments in both primary and secondary school and dramatically reducing, and indeed eliminating altogether, the gender gap in enrolments and achievements. The next chapter explores how they have done it.

3. What has been done to close the gender gap?

Our research suggests that the countries which have made most progress in eliminating gender inequalities have four main things in common. First and most important, there has been strong political commitment to women in both development and education. Related to this, policy development has been informed and influenced by the demands of strong women's networks and other key stakeholders such as teachers and parents. Third, in tandem with overarching efforts to provide free and universal access for all groups, comprehensive strategies have been implemented that specifically tackle the key *causes* of gender inequality in education. Each strategy comprises a package of inter-related measures rather than isolated and ad hoc interventions. And finally, both governments and donors have been willing to allocate the resources necessary to sustain implementation.

Taking women and education seriously

Eliminating gender inequality in education will only work if it is part of a much broader nationwide mobilisation that has ambitious goals to ensure that women fully and equally participate in all aspects of economic, social and political development. This creates the essential enabling environment for Ministries of Education and education NGOs to work together to achieve gender equality in education. Effective 'gender and development' strategies require strong affirmative action, including active labour market policies that promote skills and tackle pervasive discriminatory practices in the workplace. Other key actions concern reform of patriarchal inheritance laws, tackling violence against women (including rape), encouraging greater political involvement of women at both national and local levels, and raising the legal age of marriage. Supporting the economic empowerment of women

through small and micro enterprise development, especially through the provision of credit, is also critically important. In other words, a 'package deal' is required that covers all aspects of gender inequality and not just with regards to education.

The rise of the 'women in development' movement has played a major role in putting gender at or near the top of the development agenda. The Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995 identified strategies to improve the social, political and cultural position of women. However, there is still a large gap between policy and action in many countries. Closing this gap is first and foremost a political, rather than a technical, challenge. Until gender equity becomes a visible and popular cause, governments and elites are likely to continue neglecting it. And this is why the role of national civil society is indispensable. Signing up to international agreements such as Jomtien and Dakar is of course important, but it is how governments, working with civil society, translate these well-intentioned goals into action that is most critical. Not surprisingly, it is those governments that have been strongly committed to both gender equality *and* Education for All that have made the most progress towards the attainment of the MDG gender and education targets.

Indigenous struggles for democratisation have been very important in empowering women and ensuring that gender is increasingly mainstreamed in all key areas of policy. Veteran Nepali activist Shahana Pradhan describes the deep links between the democracy movement and the girls' education movement in Nepal:

I came into politics, not because I was interested in politics, but as a young girl I wanted to be educated and attend school along with my brothers... We joined the first political rally against the Ranas [the monarchs]. We were

immediately arrested and upon inquiry, our strong and assertive demand was a school for girls .... By 1947, the Nepal Mahila Singh [Nepal Women's Association] had been formed by a very large number of women with the major objective of bringing about social and political changes through education. Therefore, 'Education for Women' was its initial objective. By 1949, there was an [increasing] sense of responsibility among parents about sending girls to school. There was a mushroom growth of schools after democracy was established in 1951... (Belbase 1998: 187).

However, the repression of civil society after 1960 put a damper on the women's movement, and for the next 30 years government action on girls' education was largely restricted to 'lip service' measures. Since the reinstatement of multi-party democracy in 1990, growing freedom of association has made space for cross-party groups such as the Women's Security Pressure Group (WSPG) to put pressure on the Government for policy reforms in all areas relevant to women. Significant progress on girls' enrolment and retention is finally being made. We return below to the key importance of supporting and consulting indigenous advocates for gender equity and for the right to education.

The international community's renewed focus on poverty reduction, and the World Bank and IMF's shift from narrow macro-economic conditions to wider policy conditions linked to the Millennium Development Goals, have also helped to 'mainstream' gender inequality as a public policy problem.

Box 7: Political commitment to basic education in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a good example of a country whose government – under pressure from women's groups – has really bitten the political bullet and taken decisive action on gender equity. Primary education was made compulsory by an act of parliament in 1990. A substantially strengthened women's movement helped to galvanise government commitment to abolishing the education gender gap. Their leverage was increased by the actions of international bodies, resulting in commitments to women's education and gender equity that were signed by the Government (Jahan 1998: 33–34).

The Prime Minister launched the National Campaign for Social Mobilisation for Basic Education in 1992. Fees for rural girls were abolished, free uniforms were distributed to girls (later discontinued) and food for education and stipend schemes were piloted. Government spending on primary education began a significant upward trend.

The Social Mobilisation campaign used multi-media techniques to spread the message, including a cartoon series called 'Meena' highlighting the importance of education for poor girls. Simultaneously, the Ministry of Women's Affairs launched the Bangladesh Decade Action Plan for the Girl Child, called 'Samata' (equality). The Action Plan identified the problems affecting girls and women, and developed strategies to facilitate their access to basic education. It also prioritised actions needed with a focus on early childhood education as well as primary and secondary education and incentives for girls' education.

In the mid-1990s, satellite schools were started for Grade 1 and 2, fee-free education for girls was extended to Class 10, the Female Secondary Stipend Programme was extended, and a number of other incentives offered to girls and poor children in primary school. Bangladesh has consistently allocated more than 46 per cent of its education budget to primary and mass education since 1990, and the current share of education in the total budget is nearly 16 per cent.

Other factors encouraging girls to attend school have been the availability of micro-finance (through NGOs like BRAC) and expanding job opportunities in the textile and other industries.

This consistent and high level support for girls' education has been paralleled in the NGO sector. Combined government and NGO efforts to promote access and equity in education has resulted in extraordinary gains in girl's enrolments in both primary and secondary schools over the past decade.

Source: Bangladesh Report

However, international agencies could do much more in this respect. Gender has not always received comprehensive attention in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and a recent survey of 16 PRSPs found that fewer than half included measures for achieving the 2005 target (UNESCO 2002).

Mainstreaming gender within EFA strategies

To achieve gender parity, it is essential that education sector plans respond to poor people's needs, and include a comprehensive attack on all forms of educational inequality – recognising that girls typically face more than one source of disadvantage (gender, class, caste, ethnicity, physical ability etc.). It is also important to develop locally-appropriate strategies to overcome the multiple economic, cultural and social barriers that keep girls away from

schools (see Box 13). In practice, this has happened in relatively few countries. Most EFA programmes have focused on easing general access constraints but without planning specific steps to ensure that girls benefit equally from the new opportunities created (falsely assuming that gender inequalities would be automatically redressed by the expansion of free primary education). Or, they have focused on separate 'girls' programmes' without doing anything to address the overwhelming access constraints – such as high costs and shortages of schools and teachers – that place all disadvantaged groups, especially poor, rural girls, at a permanent disadvantage.

In countries such as Cambodia, the educational reform strategy did not focus on gender 'due to the many competing education needs'. Instead, generalised interventions have been based on the assumption that supply-side constraints are the most

Box 8: GABLE in Malawi

A Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education programme (GABLE) was launched in 1991 with sizeable financial support from USAID. Malawian women with political and institutional power played a critical role in the design and implementation of the project. The National Commission on Women In Development (NCWID) played a catalytic role.

In 1992, in an about-turn on the 'cost-sharing' policies introduced in the 1980s, the Government abolished tuition fees for girls. In 1994, the new democratic government removed all fees for boys and girls at primary level, including tuition and construction-fund charges.

At the same time as children were flooding back into primary schools, GABLE sought wide-ranging improvements in the education system in addition to addressing gender disparities. The following comprehensive package of measures was successfully implemented:

● School fee waiver for girls at primary school (this became redundant when fees were lifted).

● Scholarships for secondary school girls.

● Scrapping of the school uniform requirement for all children in primary schools.

● A national social mobilisation campaign to raise awareness of the critical issues surrounding girls' education.

● A new pregnancy policy that enables girls to return to school after having given birth.

● Minimum age entry regulations for primary schools.

● Lower grade repetition.

● Establishment of gender-balanced community schools.

● Curriculum reform.

● Separate mathematics classes for girls and boys.

Source: Malawi Report

critical, when, in fact, demand factors tend to be more important for girls. Another problem is that politicians have found it easy to dismiss 'gender' as a foreign concept, partly because women's groups, NGOs and other civil society members who could act as champions for girls' education, have been left 'out of the loop' in policy dialogue between governments and donors. Similarly, in Pakistan and Nigeria it has been a long uphill struggle to get politicians and policymakers to mainstream gender in major donor-supported education projects. A key factor behind recent progress has been the co-option of gender advocates from the NGO sector into influential policy-making positions in government, bringing with them not only their own commitment but also their capacity to reach out to, and mobilise, wider civil society networks.

Clearly there is no blueprint because these constraints vary so much from one country to another. However, a balanced package addressing *all* aspects of gender inequalities in education is essential. Examples from India and Malawi offer some possibilities (see Box 8 and 9).

Priority measures

Governments and NGOs have adopted a range of policies, programmes and projects in order to improve girls' education. The key measures that have been introduced in the case study countries are summarised in Table 8. Comparative analysis suggests that within an integrated and comprehensive strategy, the following interventions have been especially effective: free primary education, increased incentives, more accessible schools, tackling sexual harassment and discrimination against pregnant pupils, developing a network of community schools, introducing bridging programmes to mainstream non-formal education, and promoting early childhood education and care.

Free primary education for all

The whole or partial abolition of primary school fees has been a central plank of recent UPE strategies in many countries including Kenya, Tanzania, The Gambia, Malawi, Ethiopia, Uganda, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, and Nepal. Removing these fees has signalled government commitment to education as a right, and has helped to release enormous pent-up demand for education, causing massive increases in both girls' and boys' enrolments. In Malawi, for example, the number of primary school pupils jumped up by 50 per cent, from 1.9 million to 3.0 million, in just one year. In Bangladesh, total enrolment in primary and basic education rose from nearly 12 million in 1990, to 18 million in 2001.

The very success of free primary education has in turn created new financial and administrative challenges. Ministries face urgent needs to train and employ more teachers and to supply more classrooms and learning materials at primary level, in order to bring class sizes back down to reasonable levels. In Malawi, for example, classes of 150 pupils are now commonplace. In government primary schools in Bangladesh, this figure can reach 200. At the same time, they must also respond to unprecedented demand for secondary school places, which remain in woefully short supply in most African and South Asian countries. If the secondary bottleneck is not quickly addressed, there is a real risk of recreating inequalities at the next rung up the ladder, and perhaps ultimately undermining demand for primary education.

Finally, the 'hidden costs' of sending children to school remain as high as ever in most countries, and efforts to regulate or abolish the array of 'unofficial' charges levied by school committees and headteachers, have met with mixed results. In Tanzania, a new block grant to schools was introduced in 2002 to reduce the risk that schools would impose additional charges to make up for lost income from official fees. There have been difficulties, however, in ensuring that these

Table 8: Gender Interventions, level of effort

✔✔✓ = level of effort	Bangladesh	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Cambodia	Ethiopia	Malawi	Mali	Nigeria
Overall Government Commitment to Gender Equality	✔✔	✔✔	✓	✓	✔✔	✓	✔✔	✓	0
Compulstory Education	✔✔	✓	0	✓	0	0	0	0	✓
Reduced Costs/Higher Incentives for Education	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✓	✔✔	✓	✔✔✔	0	✓
Gender Sensitive Curriculum	✔✔	✔✔	✓	0	✓	✔✔	✓	✔✔	✓
Female Teachers	✔✔	✔✔	✓	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✓	✔✔
Infrastructure: Water and Toilets	✔✔	✔✔	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	na	✓
Access to School/Distance	✔✔	✔✔	✓	✓	✓	✓	✔✔	✔✔	✓
Alternative/Schools Community	✔✔	✔✔	✓	✓	✓	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔✔	0
Quality Education	✔✔	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	na	✓

grants actually reach the schools. However, since uniforms and textbooks remain the largest costs, after tuition fees that families face in most countries, central governments do have the relatively simple option of providing a supply of free or subsidised textbooks, and/or relaxing uniform requirements. Such steps could go far to bring down the remaining costs of education, while incentives such as free school meals can indirectly compensate.

Where rapid expansion of primary education has taken place in a severely resource-constrained environment, it has also exacerbated other problems including over-aged pupils and grade repetition. This has been a particular problem in Malawi and Cambodia, especially in rural areas. The presence of older children makes it difficult to respond to the age-appropriate educational needs of both the younger and older children. Despite growing recognition of the need to reduce repetition rates by moving towards automatic progression, many governments have done very little in this area.

All of these challenges reinforce the need for donors to deliver a better coordinated and more generous response when governments take the fundamental step of abolishing fees. Otherwise, it is very difficult to see how the education MDGs can be attained.

Parental incentives to educate girls

Incentive schemes have been introduced in many countries to reduce the overall costs of primary and secondary schooling for girls. Incentives are both monetary and in kind.

Primary school stipends: Small stipends have been offered to needy girls in many countries to support their primary schooling. In Nepal, for example, nearly 40,000 needy girls have received small scholarships (Rupees 250 per annum) in order to support their primary schooling. The impact of this programme has been significant in terms of increasing intakes, retention, and reducing dropout rates, of girls.

Improved nutrition: Feeding programmes are also increasingly common. One of the main problems facing the drought-stricken countries of Sub-Saharan Africa has been children not attending school due to hunger. Even if they do attend, they have limited concentration. In Malawi, the World Food Programme introduced a pilot feeding programme for primary school children in 2000. Initially, only the 'most needy' children were targeted, but due to the overwhelming levels of poverty, it was decided to provide free meals for all children. This illustrates the difficulty of targeting by 'need' or 'gender' in a situation of general deprivation. School feeding programmes (at pre-school and primary schools) in Central and Southern Africa have also become an important means of helping of supporting children affected by HIV/AIDS. The provision of free school meals has a major impact on school attendance.

In India books, uniforms, a mid-day meal and wheat rations are provided free to school children attending government primary schools. The gender equity drive of the Bangladesh Government has included a Food-for-Education programme for primary school children from poor families. In return for food, parents have to guarantee 75 per cent attendance of their supported children in school and a minimum of 40 per cent marks in the end of year examinations. In mid-2002, this scheme was converted into a cash grant. Both boys and girls benefit. The impact of the programme on schooling attendance has been very positive.

In Nepal, the government has piloted a 'food rations' scheme in order to help reduce the drop-out of girls in primary schools. Three litres of cooking oil are provided each month as a take home ration to mothers of girls in Grades 2–5. It is too early to assess the scheme, but some parents are reported to have sold their rations.

Secondary school scholarships: A major challenge facing countries that have achieved UPE is to deal with the bottleneck created by the increased numbers of those completing primary school. In most countries, only

Box 10: The Female Secondary School Assistance Programme in Bangladesh

The success of the FSSAP has been a key factor in the rapid expansion of female enrolments in secondary schools in Bangladesh since the early 1990s. It is an integrated package of measures with the following objectives:

- To increase the number of girls enrolled in class 6–10 and help them pass their Secondary School Certificate exam (SSC).

- To increase the number of secondary school teachers in the project schools and raise the proportion of women teachers generally.

- To provide occupational skills training to school leavers who were encouraged to become primary school teachers and para-professionals in areas such as agriculture and population programmes.

- To promote a supportive environment for girls' education through raising public awareness of the economic and social benefits of girls' education.

- To provide a healthier and safer setting for girls by improving standards of water supply and sanitation.

During the first phase of the scheme in the early 1990s, both communities and schools jointly selected scholarship recipients. The number of scholarships awarded increased from 187,320 in 1994 to 222,198 in 1997. The total cost of FSSAP over the six year period from 1994 to 1999 was US$88.4 million. Stipend rates currently cover 30–50 per cent of direct school expenses in Classes 6–10, although they are higher at the upper secondary level. All tuition fees are paid by FSSAP. Payments are also made for tuition assistance. The stipend is conditional upon parents agreeing that their daughters attend school for at least 75 per cent of the year, obtain marks of at least 45 per cent, and remain unmarried through senior secondary school, or up until their daughter's eighteenth birthday. Scholarships are now available for every girl in rural Bangladesh who has a primary school leaving certificate. The scheme was extended to senior secondary schools in 2002.

Examination pass rates among FSSAP supported girls are higher than the national average for girls. Between 1982 and 1990, female enrolment rates increased from 27 per cent to 43 per cent and dropouts fell from 15 to three per cent.

An indirect and extremely positive effect of the programme has been to raise general levels of awareness about girls' education.

Source: Bangladesh Report

children from better off families are able to afford secondary school and, without financial incentives for poorer children, this will continue to be the case. Although girls' enrolments at primary have improved, they are often less likely to complete primary school and move on to secondary than boys. The same applies to the transition from secondary to tertiary education.

Recent interviews with adult women and girls from two villages in the district of Rajshahi confirmed the 'value' of educating girls: R., a 25–year-old woman with class V education said, *"If you are educated, then you can educate your child"*. J. is 15 years old and from a poor family, *"If you are educated, then you can teach your children. You can get jobs. I will be able to teach my children"*. Interviews with young men revealed their

preferences for educated women as brides. (Arends-Kuenning and Amin, 2001).

An equally ambitious scholarship scheme has been successfully implemented in Malawi as part of the GABLE Programme. As elsewhere, one of the main motivations for parents wanting to keep their children at primary school is that they have a good chance of getting into secondary school. During the first phase of the Secondary Schools Girls' Scholarship Scheme, only 'needy' girls were selected, but it was extended to all girls in 1998. This caused something of a backlash among the parents of boys who felt that they were being discriminated against.

A girls' scholarship programme for lower secondary schooling has also been recently piloted and

implemented in four districts in Cambodia. As part of a package of support services, girls who live more than 15km from school are offered room and board with local female teachers. Not only are these arrangements more conducive to healthy social development, but they also provide a positive female role model for girls. In keeping with government policy to promote pro-poor interventions that increase educational access, programme beneficiaries are selected primarily on the basis of their socio-economic status.

Numerous other smaller scale female scholarship programmes for secondary schools have been sponsored both by government and NGOs. For example, the Ministry of Education in Nepal provided nearly 12,000 scholarships for girls attending secondary school in 1999/2000. The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) runs a small scholarship programme for secondary school girls in Grades 9 and 10 in Ethiopia. Girls are selected on the basis of need and some of the recipients are also disabled (see Box 11).

Throughout this report, we have argued that beyond making education free, there is a very strong rationale for offering additional stipends or subsidies as an incentive for poor families to keep girls in school. However, such programmes need to be carefully designed to fit local circumstances. There is no one-size-fits-all model of a successful incentive programme, but there are many lessons that can be learned from country experiences. Some of the most important are as follows:

- Clearly identify the target population.
- Communities must establish their own transparent selection procedures.
- High levels of parental and community involvement at all stages of the programme are essential.
- It is important to adopt strategies that minimise administrative costs, which can be high.
- If the goal of education policy is to increase the number of girls progressing to secondary school, offering stipends at primary school (to cover fees or extra costs such as uniforms, books, etc.), can make a significant difference to the number of female enrolments.

Box 11: Personal testimony from FAWE scholarship girls in Ethiopia

"Three of us were employed as half-day kitchen workers in order to survive ourselves. We had no time to do our homework and study. Most of us have no parents or have only one poor parent. Some of us in addition to our poorness come from far places for secondary education. Five of us have physical disabilities.

"By the time we joined this high school, we were uncertain of our future. We had no hope, no aim, no dream or vision. Thanks to this organisation, today, as well as for ourselves, we are now able to share our books with our siblings and our friends who are not able to get this chance. We are also able to share our shoes with our sisters who are in opposite shifts to us. FAWE Ethiopia has become relief to our families. We have been able to pay our house rent on time and we are also attending supplementary classes.

"On top of all this, now we have hope, confidence and self-esteem. Because of this, our achievement has improved and we have become as competent as the boys. For example in our class: two of us stood first; three of us stood third; four of us stood fourth, and the like."

Source: FAWE 2002

Ensuring girls' safety and dignity at school

'While societal and family issues are important, the presence of a vibrant and happy school in the neighbourhood can dramatically change the way communities view education for their children.' (India report)

The low quality of basic education has been recognised as a fundamental constraint in expanding girls' education in virtually every country. From a gender point of view, quality means creating a functioning and positive school environment in which girls can learn. We have reviewed above a number of interventions that have been attempted, with very limited success, to make schools 'girl-friendly', reduce female dropout, and improve girls' learning attainment. Given the enormity of the task and the difficulty of making an impact, we recommend that governments start with the basics: stamping out the sexual intimidation and harassment of girl pupils, and providing basic facilities for their safety and dignity. Unless and until these prerequisites are in place, more ambitious targets for improving quality are unlikely to be achieved.

Governments that are serious about getting girls into school must prioritise the provision of toilets and running water above other infrastructure improvements. Although facilities in mosque schools in Pakistan are generally much worse than those of most government schools, they attract girls in equal or greater numbers to 'better' government schools – an outcome that puzzled researchers until they discovered that mosque schools are not only cheaper, but almost always have running water and sanitary facilities (Rugh 2000).

Dealing with sexual harassment and intimidation of girl pupils is an uphill struggle in most countries because it means challenging deeply-entrenched male attitudes towards female sexuality; but, by the same token, it is very difficult to see how schools can ever become 'girl-friendly' as long as such attitudes and practices are allowed to persist (see Box 12).

Linked to the problem of sexual harassment, in many countries girls who get pregnant, often as a result of unwanted encounters with teachers or male pupils, are penalised by being forced to drop out of school (while the baby's father seldom faces any kind of

Box 12: Fighting sexual harassment

Wolmera Primary School in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, has over 1,000 pupils. Harassment of female students, child labour, abduction and rape are some of the harmful practices in the school. Solutions to these problems have been proposed by the school's Girls Club. Teachers, NGOs, community members, students and the police force are also involved in fighting sexual and other types of harassment. Teachers give staff training by picking some agendas that are educative and give lectures on some of the harmful practices both for other staff members and the students.

Female teachers provide sex education and discuss the problems that arise because of their gender. There was one incident that took place just prior to the arrival of the team of experts. A girl named Tigist in Grade 3 had stopped attending school. The incident was reported to the Girls Club. The club members followed it up and found out that the girl had been raped at the school by an 18-year-old student, who was in Grade 4. The girl was brought back to school and the boy was taken into police custody the same day. The father of the girl was contacted and brought in for discussions with the director.

In another incident, a girl was forced to marry against her will. The Girls Club intervened and succeeded in getting a divorce and the girl resumed her studies. Another girl was forced to quit class because of repeated harassment. After a year of absence, she was approached by her teachers and club members and continued school. Girls are encouraged to participate in all extra curricular activities including sports. The family Planning club provides sex education especially for those girls who are older and are still in lower grades.

Source: Ethiopia report.

sanction). Pregnant girls are reportedly expelled from school in Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda and Zambia, while the rules have been changed in Bolivia, Botswana, Chile, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Kenya, and Malawi (Tomasevski 2003: 165).

However, even where laws and regulations have been enacted to guarantee young mothers a right to continue their education, it is equally important that school management provides a sympathetic and constructive environment in which girls can return after giving birth. Botswana has found it necessary to deal with many obstacles in order to encourage girls to return, including relaxing age limits and procedures for re-admission (FAWE 2000 quoted in Tomasevski 2003).

Box 13: Getting girls into school the BRAC way

The BRAC approach to non-formal primary education has been instrumental in proving that gender and poverty do not have to be impediments to education. An innovative approach to curriculum design and school management encourages attendance by poor children, and by poor girls in particular, typically excluded by the formal system. Crucially, BRAC has succeeded in channelling poor children into the mainstream, by qualifying them to enter the formal system on graduation. The success of the approach lies in the way it has evolved to respond to poor people's needs, while tackling sensitive problems of gender with locally-appropriate strategies. Not only are BRAC schools attractive to children and parents in this way, they are also accessible in terms of the direct and opportunity costs to parents of sending their children to school.

The BRAC school programme has expanded from 22 experimental schools in 1985, to about 35,000 schools with over one million students, and an equal number of graduates. About 70 per cent of these students are girls, and nearly all teachers are women. The core programmes, Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) and Basic Education for Older Children (BEOC) focus on delivering basic reading, writing and numerical skills in appealing and relevant formats. Social science topics are taught through activities and with reference to local practicalities. Classes are small at about 30 pupils per teacher, curricula are creative and participatory, and dropout rates are very low, at less than five per cent. The emphasis is on interactive learning, rather than rote learning, and new materials are continually being developed to enhance the process.

Remarkably, each year about 90 per cent of BRAC school graduates move into the formal system – a development not even anticipated in 1985. BRAC now sees its role as complementary to the government system, providing disadvantaged poor children with the foundations necessary to participate in the formal sector. Rapid scaling up led to initial challenges in the areas of management, teaching quality, and sustaining literacy. The programme has now stabilised and is focusing on tackling these issues. The schools have recently been supplemented by lending libraries for graduates to maintain literacy and to continue learning, and models adapted to the needs of urban children, including retrenched child garment factory workers. Other NGOs have adopted this approach, which BRAC supports with training, materials and financial resources.

BRAC's success in widening educational access for poor students, poor girls in particular, can be attributed to the responsiveness and flexibility of the approach. From the outset, the programme has evolved to be relevant to the needs and interests of the community. Parents must request a school for their village, and support the programme by finding a location, setting school hours, and attending monthly parent-teacher meetings. A committee of three parents, a local leader, and a teacher has overall responsibility for school management. Teachers are usually women with secondary school education and are recruited from the local community. They receive short but intensive initial and refresher training. Local community involvement ensures that parents remain committed to and involved with the school, and that the school remains responsive to the learning needs of its pupils. The curriculum is practical, including issues relating to everyday life, and the fact that school hours are set to allow for other activities helps to minimise the opportunity costs of sending children to school. Unlike in the formal sector, there are no hidden costs for poor families to send their children to BRAC schools.

The reasons for BRAC's success in reducing gender disparities in education are clear: from the outset the programme has been receptive to the concerns and needs of poor families, paying particular attention to the reasons why parents are unwilling or unable to educate their girls. The challenge for the future is to mainstream this success, by carrying it over to the formal sector.

Source: Hossain in Subrahmanian 2002.

Community schools

The emergence of various kinds of community school has had a major impact in redressing gender inequalities in education in a growing number of countries. Community schools have been developed in different shapes and forms mainly in South Asia and Africa over the past two decades. They differ from government schools in that they are mainly funded by contributions and fees and are managed by the local community. They also tend to be located in the more remote areas where populations have had little connection with 'modern' schooling (Hyde, 2003).

The spread of the village or community school owes much to the work of the Bangladesh Rural Action Committee (BRAC) (see Box 13).

The success of the BRAC model has spawned the development of similar community schools in a growing number of countries elsewhere in Asia and also Africa. For example, UNICEF has supported the development of community schools in Uganda, Guinea, Zambia and Egypt. The government provides classrooms and pays the salaries of teachers, while UNICEF trains the facilitators. Schooling is free and children are not required to wear uniforms. The project has had high levels of school attendance and low dropouts, while student performance is generally better than in government primary schools.

Evaluations show that, despite often very different country contexts, learning outcomes of community schools are frequently better, and certainly no worse, than in government schools. Furthermore, relationships between teachers, students and communities appear to be good, and these schools provide opportunities for basic education for children, who might otherwise, not have had any. However, a number of common problems have also been identified.

- They tend to be introduced in poor areas with low access to schooling, lacking transport and communication.
- The community is compelled to provide significant support in building and managing schools and in paying the teachers. This can be onerous.
- The teachers/instructors are either less qualified, or paid less, than teachers in government schools.
- Sponsors of community schools have attempted to use age, and geography, as criteria to restrict access to the schools (so as to keep class sizes down), whereas the communities often want a more inclusive approach.

Box 14: Community schools in Mali and Malawi

The net enrolment rate was only 18 per cent in Mali in 1988 and 14 per cent for girls. Adult literacy was so low that it was a major obstacle to development projects. The village or community school programme evolved from 1992 onwards after an experimental phase. Community schools were initially established with support from Save the Children (US) who provided all the materials during the first year. Enrolment was restricted to children from the village and instructors were respected members of the community. Initially, they were paid by the community at a minimum rate of one-ninth of the cost of a government teacher. By 2001, the number of community schools had grown to 2,338 – one-third of all primary schools in the country. There is strong evidence that access for girls has improved significantly, particularly in the more remote areas of the country.

Save the Children (US) was also instrumental in the initial promotion of community schools in Malawi. Villages were selected on the grounds of distance from school, the number of out of school children likely to register, and the willingness of the community to engage in self-help work. However, unlike in Mali, the number of NGO-supported community schools has remained quite limited. In part, this is because the Government has not been particularly supportive and lacked flexibility on key issues, such as the recognition of teachers' qualifications.

Source: Hyde 2003

Box 15: ACCESS schools in Ethiopia

Communities throughout Ethiopia have built ACCESS centres with ActionAid support. Each centre offers a three-year basic education. The standard is high and most third year students enrol in Grade 5 at government schools. The programme is flexible, teachers are from the community, and students feel free and at ease. The centres are usually only a short walk from their homes and there is continuous follow up and advice. If students are weak in their lessons, facilitators provide tutorial, there is no corporal punishment. Adequate teaching and learning materials are available. A total of 20,000 children are currently enrolled at 256 centres across the country.

Source: Ethiopia report

Box 16: The multiple spin-offs of community participation of Lok Jumbish, Rajasthan

Community participation and involvement threw up many challenges; it also opened many new avenues that were not part of the original project design. These spin-offs really made Lok Jumbish very different from other projects. Some of these intended and unintended spin-offs are:

- The problem of girls who have 'missed the bus' was brought home. LJ workers, under pressure to do something about the educational needs of adolescent girls and young women, responded by setting up intensive residential courses for adolescent girls and young women, which also became a means to identify and train women workers – a rarity in Rajasthan. This is a direct product of community demand and would not have been possible without the involvement of parents.

- It was soon realised that adolescent girls needed a lot more than the three R's. Building their self-esteem and confidence, giving them information about their body, health and hygiene, and just letting them discover the joys of childhood, was also important. This led to the formation of Kishori Mandi.

- Education camps were set up for adolescent girls who have never attended school to catch up and join formal schools, as well as build their self-esteem and self-confidence. Winning the trust of the community and persuading them to send their girls to a camp is an achievement in itself.

- School preparation camps for children with disabilities were organised. The need to do something for disabled children was brought home through school mapping.

- Reaching out and working with girls from the Garasia tribe was another challenge. Educational processes have bypassed this community. Again, bringing in girls from this community was possible because of continuous dialogue with parents.

- The setting up of open schools with flexible timings where the teacher is available for eight hours to tribal children who come in at times that are convenient to them. These schools support tribal children who wander with their parents collecting minor forest produce.

- The initiative to survey the school buildings, set up committees to oversee repair and maintenance, or even new construction, has been transferred to the people. Whenever a community is ready, women are trained to supervise construction. Infrastructure is thus built through people's participation. This aspect of Lok Jumbish is a significant achievement that challenges conventional development projects.

Source: India report

A number of other 'alternative' schools that cater for children in remote and marginal areas also have many of the same characteristics of community schools. For example, ActionAid has sponsored schools in Ethiopia that have sought to confront the thorny issue of distance (see Box 15).

In India, as in several Francophone African countries, the present expansion of government schools is being made possible by the employment of 'para- teachers' who are from the local communities, but who are paid less, enjoy few benefits or career development opportunities, and have less training and lower qualifications than teachers in government schools. This presents a dilemma for government policy because the use of such teachers does enable schools to function, but at the risk of developing a 'second tier' of education. Systematic evaluation is needed to ascertain the impact of these schemes on quality and equity.

Involving communities

A lot has been done to raise community awareness of the importance of educating girls. Participatory methods are now commonplace and used by NGOs and governments alike to promote greater grassroots participation in education.

Lok Jumbish (meaning People's Movement) was jointly established by the NGO and the Government of Rajistan in the early 1990s to respond to very low enrolment, high dropout rates of girls, teacher absenteeism, and lack of schools close to home. A highly effective and innovative approach has evolved on the basis of widespread participation and experimentation. Huge strides have been made in increasing enrolments and encouraging more girls into school (see Box 16).

UNICEF also has two major awareness-raising programmes. The Meena Initiative in Bangladesh uses a multimedia approach to raise the profile of girls as well as stressing the importance of education. The Sara initiative in East, Central and Southern Africa was modelled on 'Meena'. Materials produced are used in both formal and non-formal settings. Both programmes have been supported by a number of bi-lateral donors. Although Meena is considered to be a success in the South Asian context, adapting the same set of materials from one cultural environment to another has been problematic.

Establishing bridging programmes

The main aim of bridging/accelerated programmes has been to get children back into school. They share some of the characteristics of community schools, but tend to be more remedial in their approach (see Box 17).

Box 17: Mahila Shikshan Vihar, Jalore

Situated in the Jodhpur District of Rajasthan, the Mahila Shikshan Vihar (MSV), Jalore is an institution with a difference. Young women are motivated to participate in a residential crash education programme. Most of them have either dropped out of school, or have never been to one. Women are divided into eight groups of nine to twelve, according to their educational level and pace of learning. Teachers work with the groups, teaching, testing, and preparing them to take the Grade V exam. There is one teacher for every group of ten to twelve women – moving along at the pace of the learners. And what is more – these young women learn at such a fast pace that it leaves the teachers exhausted. They seem to have boundless energy for games, music, theatre, cycling and even driving the solitary auto-rickshaw parked in the campus. They manage their food, washing, cleaning, and of course maintaining the school premises – including the kitchen and the garden. In the evenings and late into the night – these bright young women can be seen huddled together studying, teaching and learning. Twenty-four hours seem too short. It almost seems as if they were trying to catch up every minute of their childhood that was lost – enjoying every bit of it. The Jalore MSV can leave a visitor dizzy.

Source: India report

South Asia has a large number of such bridging courses, which are essential given that so many individuals 'drop through' the education net. Although these courses and projects are remedial, they make a huge difference to women's and girl's lives in particular. The idea of attaching bridging courses to a government school would seem sensible and likely to reinforce the importance of the mainstream. However, such schemes should not be accepted as permanent solutions. The aim should be to get the education system functioning properly, so that the need for such programmes is gradually reduced and eventually eliminated.

Involving and nurturing gender advocates

In an earlier study, the author found that contrary to the common belief that it was donors who pushed girls' education to the fore in Malawi, 'evidence indicates that it was local women's groups who lobbied for special attention to be given to female education' (Swainson 1998: 35). In particular, the organised political power of the League of Malawi Women greatly enhanced the influence of gender advocates within the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Community Services. Additionally, the first woman Minister of Education, appointed in 1993, 'played a central role in steering through the pregnancy and school uniform reforms... she was ideally placed as a gender advocate to introduce what were culturally-sensitive and controversial measures, such as those dealing with schoolgirl pregnancy' (Swainson 1998: 37).

Similar conclusions can be derived from the Bangladesh experience. According to Jahan (1998: 33–34), the Government's commitment to girls' education was galvanised in the mid-1990s by a substantially strengthened women's movement which effectively 'articulated women's demand for equal access to, and control over, all social resources and services'. Their leverage was increased by the actions of international bodies, resulting in commitments to women's education and gender equity that were signed by the Government.

A recent assessment of three Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs) to donor aid for education, suggests that their success in promoting gender equity goals could be greatly increased if donors made more active efforts to reach out to, consult and support, indigenous gender networks. Donors should 'work on the assumption that gender equality is an inseparable part of the sustainable development agenda, which already has the support of many key players in education in the partner country; [and] ensure that support to 'champions of reform' extends to these 'gender champions'' (Norton et al 2000: 15).

Promoting early childhood education and care

Pre-school children benefit greatly from attending early childhood development and care centres (ECDC) in terms of improved socialisation and improved learning; and such facilities also free up older girls to attend class instead of looking after younger siblings. Community-based pre-schools have been established on a pilot basis in Cambodia, in order to promote girls' enrolment in Grade 1, with excellent results. In India, ECDC centres attached to primary schools have increased the attendance and enrolment of girls, who can bring their younger siblings to the centre rather than having to stay at home to look after them. However, cost considerations have prevented most countries from significantly expanding this type of educational provision. In India, less than 20 per cent of primary schools have ECDC facilities. A study on early learning childhood development programmes in Kenya concluded that *'in addition to increasing the future productivity of children, low cost ECDC programmes would be likely to produce the twin effects of releasing the mothers' time for market work and allowing older girl siblings to participate in school. ECDC programmes may be seen as optimal investments that affect both the current and future welfare of households with small children'* (Lokshin et al, 2000: 22).

4. Beyond rhetoric: Making gender equality in education a reality

Giving all girls a fair chance to learn is practical, affordable and essential. There can be no more excuses for governments, both in the South and the North, to avoid committing the necessary resources to make gender equality a reality for the 65 million girls who are currently unfairly denied access to education. This is a massive injustice that must end – now.

To date, only a handful of governments have made the elimination of gender inequality in education a top priority. The reality is that those denied their right to education usually have little political voice, while people in power in most countries have little personal stake in the government school system. On both counts, it has been easy until now for decision-makers to ignore the educational needs of girls and poor people. Without sustained political commitment backed up by civil society as a whole, the same fate will befall the current gender targets as did the Jomtien targets during the 1990s. Overcoming these political constraints will require organised pressure by all sections of civil society. As the process of democratisation gathers pace, governments will be obliged to take these demands seriously.

At the same time, the stark reality is that most countries with large numbers of out-of-school girls are too poor to tackle this problem without a substantial increase in aid and debt relief from the North – where a girl's right to education has been guaranteed for many decades. Bi-lateral and multi-lateral agencies must act on their commitment to dramatically and rapidly increase aid to basic education, starting with the immediate delivery of funds already promised via the EFA Fast Track Initiative.

Setting clear operational targets

As we have repeatedly argued throughout this report, a generalised expansion of primary education is necessary but not sufficient to achieve the education MDGs. Action must also be to address the gender-specific discrimination and disadvantage that confronts girls at every step along the way, from year one enrolment, to secondary school graduation. Each country must develop, as a matter of urgency, a comprehensive strategy for gender equality in education. Governments therefore need to translate the 2005 and 2015 goals into clear operational targets, and put these targets at the heart of their education sector and poverty reduction plans.

Even though 2005 is less than two years away, no country is so far off track that it cannot eliminate gender gaps in rural and urban primary and secondary school **intake** rates by 2005. The next challenge is to ensure that **completion** rates between boys and girls are equalised by 2010. As we have seen, by far the largest gender gaps are in rural areas. So it is important to have separate rural and urban intake and completion targets.

On this timetable, gender enrolment parity will finally be achieved in 2011 for primary education and 2009 for secondary education. We cannot afford to let this target slip. In order to achieve the goal of universal completion of primary education by 2015, it is necessary for all eligible children, both girls and boys, to start primary school on time by 2009/10, and to complete the primary cycle five or six years later.

The essential statistics on rural and urban intake and completion rates, that are needed to make robust estimates for these targets, are simply unavailable in most countries. Strenuous efforts must be made,

therefore, for every country to have this information by the end of 2003.

Clear, time-bound targets must be backed up by the necessary commitment of resources and proper management systems. Gender targets should be incorporated into the performance targets, appraisal systems and career incentives facing every education worker, from Ministers down to classroom teachers.

Bilateral and multilateral donors should also translate the education MDGs into clear outcome targets for their own support to girls' education. While the trend towards comprehensive sector development plans and budgetary support may make it difficult or impossible to disaggregate how much aid has been committed to 'girls' education' per se, donors could set specific targets for how many out-of-school girls their aid programmes will have assisted to enter school by 2005, and to enter and complete school by 2010. The girls' education handbook being rolled out to all staff by CIDA, provides constructive examples of detailed practical benchmarks and outcome indicators on girls' education.

Sizing up the challenge

Figure 12 shows the sizes of the target increases in female entry Grade 1 enrolments for 2005 for five of the case study countries. These intake targets have been calculated on the assumption that female gross intake rates in 2005 are equalised with the intake rates for males in 2000. In reality though, it is unlikely that male intake rates would freeze in this way, especially in fast expanding primary education systems. Grade 1 intakes will have to increase by nearly 60 per cent in Ethiopia and Mali, and nearly 40 per cent in India, if this intake parity target is to be achieved. It is much less in Cambodia (just eight per cent) and, given demographic trends, it is negative for Bangladesh. Elsewhere, these targets are over 60 per cent for most French-speaking African countries (for example, Togo is 63 per cent, and Niger is 62 per cent).

Assuming that it would be possible to achieve gender parity with respect to enrolment ratios by 2005, Figure 13 shows that South and West Asia poses the greatest challenge, followed by the Middle East and North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. Gender enrolment parity has already been largely achieved in Latin America, the Caribbean, and East Asia and the Pacific.

Figure 12: Target percentage increase in girl intakes to primary school by 2005 (percentages)
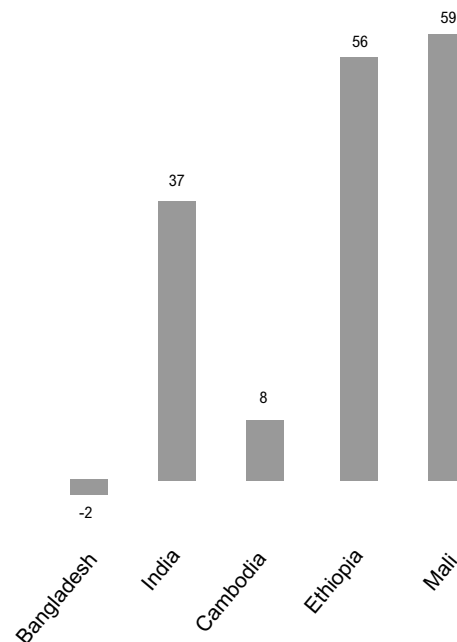
Source: UNESCO

Figure 13: Target female net enrollment rates to meet the 2005 and 2015 education MDGs
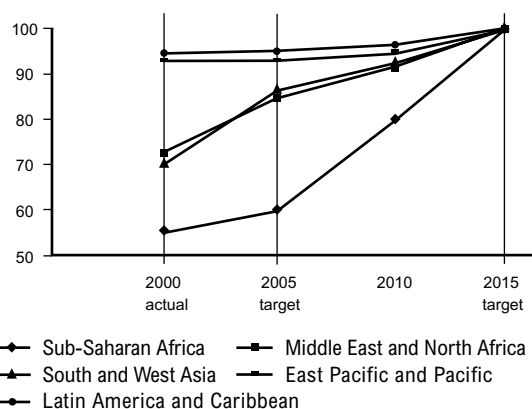
Source: UNESCO

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the overall female net enrolment rate will have to almost double from its current level in order to meet the 2015 target (see Figure 13). Among the group of French-speaking African countries where gender inequalities are particularly acute, female enrolments will have to increase by over 200 per cent (assuming zero repetition), compared with around 120 per cent for males. In Southern Africa, on the other hand, female enrolments will only have to increase by six per cent to meet the 2015 target, mainly because of the impact of HIV/AIDS on the school-aged population.

What must be done?

Clearly, there is no single blueprint that can be rolled out for all countries. The need for diverse and creative national policy responses is underlined in Table 9, which shows the top recommendations highlighted by the local researchers for eight of the case study countries at a workshop (See also Annex 1). However, there are also certain basic concerns that must be addressed in nearly all countries.

In order to achieve the 2005 and 2015 education goals, governments and donors must work together to:

Table 9: Priority Gender Interventions

	Bangladesh	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Cambodia	Ethiopia	Malawi	Mali	Nigeria
NFE/Bridging for Adolescent Girls	✓	✓			✓			✓	
Female Literacy					✓		✓	✓	
Gender Sensitive Curriculum and Practice			✓			✓			✓
Integrate Life Skills into Curriculum	✓				✓				
Protection Against Sexual Harassment at School							✓		
Support for Children Affected by HIV/AIDS and Pregnant School Girls									✓
Improve Separate Toilets at School for Girls and Boys							✓		
Day Care Facilities	✓	✓	✓				✓		
Compulsory Education				✓		✓			
Mentoring for Girls								✓	
Incentives (fee subsidies, cash or kind) for Pupils		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
Participation in Community/School Management			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Improve and Expand Teacher Training for Women. Incentives for Women Teachers	✓			✓	✓	✓			

1) End the education queue

There are only a few developing countries in which affluent males have not already achieved universal primary education. There are only a few developing countries in which poor, rural girls are even close to achieving the same. In India, for example, nearly a third of rural girls have never been to school, and in Ethiopia, the figure climbs to almost two-thirds. Gender gaps are often greatest in countries where overall net enrolments are low. By failing to increase access so that there are enough free school places to accommodate all of the boys *and* all of the girls, governments create an education queue in which the poorest and least privileged groups, including girls, are almost certain to come last (Filmer 1999). The following steps are needed to get rid of this queue:

- Build enough schools and hire enough teachers to guarantee that all communities are served by a school within safe walking distance for girls.

- Remove school fees, which guarantee the continuing exclusion of poor rural girls. When parents can only afford to keep one child in school, daughters usually lose out. By contrast, in Uganda, following the introduction of free primary education, the number of girls enrolled increased from 1.4 million in 1996, to 3 million in 1999, and girls' share in total enrolment has steadily grown.

- Expand 'bridging' schemes developed by NGOs to attract hard-to-reach children into the school system.

- To avoid recreating the queue at secondary level, governments must plan to rapidly extend free and universal access to secondary schools. Currently, only one in five girls in Africa and two in five girls in South and West Asia, get the chance to go to secondary school.

2) Offer extra help for poor families to keep girls in school

On the one hand, stand-alone gender 'initiatives' have been ineffective, unless integrated with strategies to expand access for everyone and reduce the queue for education. On the other hand, generalised expansion of primary education alone will not specifically address the particular problems faced by girls. Positive action must be taken to level the playing field, so that girls – especially those who are poor, lower caste and live in remote rural areas – can benefit from educational expansion in equal or greater measure as boys. As enrolments continue to expand, more effort will be needed to meet the schooling needs of these hard-to-reach girls.

In particular, extra assistance, such as a free school meal, or stipends linked to regular attendance, helps poor families keep girls in school for longer. It is also an inexpensive and effective way to redistribute resources towards poor communities, since a relatively small upfront investment by governments enables poor girls to acquire a lifelong asset that allows them to escape the poverty trap. Stipends for secondary school girls have been particularly effective; they not only increase secondary enrolments, but also create strong incentives for girls to enter and complete primary level. In Bangladesh, districts where secondary school bursaries were introduced experienced a sharp decrease in child marriages, as well as soaring girls' enrolments. Governments need to involve communities and civil society groups in developing incentive packages that are appropriate to local circumstances, and the costs of rolling out such programmes to all districts need to be factored into donor and government plans.

3) Launch a rescue plan for schools in poor communities.

'The problem today is not that parents do not want to send their daughters to school. The tragedy is that they would like to send them, but the absence of a proper functioning school and the poor quality of education, comes in the way of realising their aspirations.' (India report).

Parents withdraw girls from school if they perceive that their daughters are not learning anything; or worse, that they are vulnerable to abuse, attack and humiliation on school grounds. Yet many schools in poor, rural areas (and urban slums) lack even the basics needed to function. They frequently have far

fewer resources, offer fewer hours of instruction, and attain far worse results, than schools in more affluent areas. All schools need a trained, motivated teacher who turns up every day to teach, and enough books and desks to go around. Construction of safe and private toilet facilities for girls should be mandatory. Strong sanctions against the sexual abuse and harassment of girl pupils must be enacted and enforced.

A first priority should be improving the status, pay and support of teachers, especially those teachers posted to rural or 'difficult' areas. Long-standing quotas for gender parity among rural teachers should be backed up with efforts to extend and improve teacher training facilities in the rural as well as the urban areas, and additional incentives and career development opportunities for female teachers willing to take up posts in the rural areas.

While learning outcomes are unacceptably low in many countries, it is essential that reforms are rooted in the local realities. Traditional chalk and talk teaching methods have been justifiably criticised, but the experience of the last 20 years shows that attempts to import learner-centred learning methodologies without taking local cultures into account have often been problematic.

4) Encourage a range of education provision
The scale and urgency of the action necessary to meet the 2005 goal makes it essential that NGOs are strongly supported in playing a complementary role in developing sustainable education provision. Sadly, not every country has an NGO of the size and vision of BRAC in Bangladesh, but much more can be done to expand and mainstream the provision by NGOs of basic education, especially to hard-to-reach groups. These schools need to develop clear 'pathways' and linkages with the formal system so that the non-formal sector does not become a 'ghetto' for girls and poor students. Greater flexibility is needed so that eventual transfer to state schools is facilitated and encouraged. Some of the new, wide-ranging

education sector development plans, currently being rolled out in many countries, do not pay enough attention to this key role of NGOs, nor have NGOs been sufficiently involved in the design and management of these sector plans.

5) Engage with civil society
Experience shows that a top-down approach to girls' education is not only ineffective, it may create resistance and resentment that will ultimately be counter-productive – a leading cause of 'implementation failure' in girls' education (Ramachandran 1998). Acting with urgency must not be confused with acting in haste, or used as an excuse for shutting out the participation of parents, teachers and gender experts in designing reforms. This is especially crucial because of the social and cultural complexity that surrounds girls' education:

'Behind the hype lies a cauldron of considerations that constitute today's discourse around girls' education: parental perceptions on the benefits of educating girls, changing social network support systems affecting girls' participation and persistence in school, and overcoming barriers to women's leadership.' (Mali report).

The participation of communities, teachers and women's groups in the policy-making process is crucial to developing appropriate, well-informed responses to local complexities, and generating the broad-based support needed to implement them successfully.

However, as the UK government has recognised in creating the Commonwealth Education Fund, effective gender advocates do not simply appear from nowhere. Governments and donors must open the door to robust and regular exchange with civil society groups, instead of the usual one-off 'consultations'; they must also provide timely access to information and support civil society efforts to build advocacy skills.

6) Break the glass ceiling
Expanding primary school opportunities for girls is obviously a first priority for the countries furthest off

track for achieving the 2005 goal. But given the very severe shortages of secondary school places in most developing countries, a sole focus on attaining UPE may have the unintended effect of turning the primary school leaving exam into a 'glass ceiling' that few girls are able to break through. To avoid creating a new education queue at secondary level, governments must plan to rapidly extend free and universal access to secondary schools. Currently, only one in five girls in Africa, and two in five girls in South and West Asia, get the chance to go to secondary school.

Given the unemployment crisis in most countries, school leavers stand little chance of finding a job in the 'formal sector', unless they have done well in their secondary school leaving examinations. Moreover, many of the health and productivity benefits of educating girls are not fully unlocked until secondary education is attained. This highlights the importance of balanced investment by donors and governments in increasing girls' access, completion and achievement at secondary level.

In the large majority of countries, gender inequalities are most serious at universities and other higher education institutions. It is often forgotten that the gender parity goal includes equity at tertiary level by 2015. Expanding the output of female graduates from these institutions is essential in order to ensure that women can begin to occupy the full range of professional and management jobs, and in doing so, break down dominant patriarchal views about gender and employment. Increasing the numbers of educated and qualified women can act as a powerful and positive influence on girls. 'The presence of strong role models and positive images among the educated youth acts as a propelling force, encouraging the community to invest in the education of their children' (India Report).

7) Counter the impact of HIV/AIDS
The AIDS epidemic has very serious implications for the attainment of gender equality in basic education, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. The three main areas of impact are lower enrollment growth, increased teacher morbidity and mortality, and increased numbers of orphans and other children directly affected by the epidemic. Girls are likely to be particularly badly affected by the impact since they will be expected to look after sick parents and other family members, as well as take over some of their household activities. Girl orphans are also thought to be more vulnerable than boys and are, therefore, very likely to drop out of school. Given that AIDS-related mortality is expected to be highest among young female adults, this has possible far reaching implications for female teachers and any attempt to increase the number of female teaching staff. It is essential, therefore, that in high HIV prevalence countries, comprehensive strategies are developed by Ministries of Education with their partners to both prevent and mitigate the impact of the epidemic on students and teachers, particularly females.

8) Invest more in girls
Countries that have achieved success in girls' schooling are ones that have dramatically increased their own spending on basic education to as much as 20 per cent of their budget, or 3 per cent of their GDP. Yet even at this high level of government commitment, low-income countries will still need substantial help – in the order of $5.6bn per year in external resources – in order to achieve the education MDGs (UNESCO 2002).

However, the total value of bilateral education aid in 2000 was 30 per cent lower in real terms than in 1999. The nine countries in this study alone face a financing gap of about USD $1bn per year. Until the financing gap is closed, the gender gap cannot be closed.

Aid not only needs to be increased, it needs to be intelligently targeted towards countries that face the greatest numerical and financial challenges in attaining the 2005 and 2015 goals, and whose governments show real and demonstrated commitment to redressing gender inequalities. Firm, long-term financial aid is required in order for

governments to be able to commit external resources to meet salary costs and other recurrent expenditures. If only domestic resources can be used to pay for teacher salaries, then this is likely to be a major constraint on the expansion of basic and secondary education.

The Global Campaign for Education is calling for a new global financing framework for basic education, in order to channel increased aid to the countries that are most in need of additional resources and have good policies in place for meeting the 2005 and 2015 education goals. The Fast Track Initiative, endorsed last year by the G7 leaders, the World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF, provides a starting point. The FTI could be enormously helpful in accelerating progress towards the 2005 and 2015 targets, by guaranteeing the long-term predictable financing that governments need in order to provide free and universal access, and to achieve minimum quality levels in all schools.

However, the FTI's impact on the 2005 goal will be limited unless it includes funding for subsidy programmes to get girls into school. Donors must also agree a timetable for expanding entry to more countries, including those with the most out-of-school girls and largest gender gaps.

FTI financing estimates also need urgent revision to take the real costs of achieving gender equity into full consideration – including the removal of fees and charges, the introduction of nation-wide subsidy or incentive schemes for the poorest families, and positive steps to improve conditions for both teachers and students.

We know what needs to be done to provide all girls with their right to a basic education, we know what it will cost. We also know what a high price there is to be paid for failure. We must now mobilise this ambition and all the available resources to implement and achieve what we know to be right.

References and Bibliography

Al-Samarrai, S. and P. Bennell. 2003. 'Where has all the education gone? Educational outcomes for secondary school graduates'. Draft (processed). London: DFID.

Arends-Kuenning, M. and S. Amin. 2001. 'Women's Capabilities and the right to education in Bangladesh'. *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society,* Vol. 15. No. 1, September.

Belbase, L.N. et al. 1998. 'The Nepal Experience' in V. Ramachandran, (ed.), *Bridging the gap between intention and action: girls' and women's education in South Asia.* Delhi: ASPBAE and UNESCO.

Bennell, P., B. Chilisa, K. Hyde, A. Makgothi, E. Molobe and L. Mpotokwane. 2002. *The impact of HIV/AIDS on primary and secondary schooling in Botswana: developing a comprehensive strategic response.* London and Gaborone: DFID Research Series and Ministry of Education.

Bennell, P., K. Hyde, and N. Swainson. 2002. *The impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on the education sector in Sub-Saharan Africa: a synthesis of findings and recommendations of three country studies.* Brighton: Centre for International Education, February.

Bicego, G. and O. Ahmad, 1996, 'Infant and Child Mortality', *Demographic and Health Surveys Comparative Studies* No. 20. Calverton, Maryland: Macro International Inc.

Brickhill, P., C.O. Hoppers and K. Pehrsson. 1996. *Textbooks as an agent of change.* Harare: Sida.

Burchfield, S.A., and E.C. Kadzamira. 1996. 'Malawi GABLE Social Mobilisation Campaign activities: A review of research and report on findings of KAP followup study'. Washington, D.C.: Creative Associates International Inc. and USAID.

Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN). 1995. *The Child Worker,* Issue No. 24, March.

Chimombo, J.P.G. and R. Chonzi. 1999. 'School dropout and teenage pregnancy: its causes and magnitude'. Draft (processed). Zomba: prepared for the Rockefeller Foundation.

Colclough, C., S. Al-Samarrai, P. Rose, and M. Tembon. N.d. 'Achieving schooling for all in Africa: costs, commitment and gender'. Draft book manuscript (processed). Brighton: IDS.

FAWE 2000. 'Botswana re-entry policy'. *FAWE News* 8(3), July–September.

FAWE 2002. 'Bursary scheme in Ethiopia'. Processed. Addis Ababa, July.

Filmer, D., E.M. King and L. Pritchett. 1998. 'Gender disparity in South Asia: comparisons between and within countries'. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, January.

Filmer, D. 1999. 'The structure of social disparities in education: gender and wealth'. Policy Research Report on Gender and Development. Working Paper. No. 5. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

Gertler, C., and P. Glewwe. 1992. 'The willingness to pay for education for daughters in contrast to sons: evidence from rural Peru'. *World Bank Economic Review* 6 (1).

Herz, B., K. Subbarao, M. Habib and L. Raney. 1991. 'Letting girls learn: Promising approaches in primary and secondary education'. Washington, D.C: World Bank Discussion Paper, No.113.

Hossain, N., R. Subrahmanian, and N. Kabeer. 2002. 'The politics of educational expansion in Bangladesh'. Brighton: IDS Working Paper 167.

Hyde, K.A.L. and E.C. Kadzamira. 1994. 'GABLE knowledge, attitudes and practice pilot survey'. Zomba: University of Malawi, Centre for Social Research.

Hyde, K.A.L. 2003. 'Expanding educational opportunities at primary level: are community schools the answer?'. Draft report (processed). Nairobi: sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation, March.

Ilon, L. 1992. 'Fitting girls' schooling into existing economic paradigms: confronting the complexities', *International Journal of Educational Development,* Vol. 12, No.2.

Ilon, L. 1996. 'Girls' Scholarship Programme: management and process'. Washington, D.C.: prepared for Creatives Associates, USAID and the Malawi Ministry of Education, September.

Jahan, R. 1998. 'The Bangladesh experience', in V. Ramachandran (ed.), *Bridging the gap between intention and action: girls' and women's education in South Asia,* Delhi: APSBAE and UNESCO.

Jayaweera, J. 1997. 'Women, education and empowerment in Asia', *Gender and Education,* Vol. 9, No 4, pp. 411–423.

Kabeer, N. 2001. 'Deprivation, discrimination and delivery: competing explanations for child labour and educational failure in South Asia'. Brighton: IDS Working Paper, No. 135, May.

Kadzamira, E.C., and M. Ndalama. 1997. 'Primary community schools project Southern Region baseline study'. Draft (processed). Lilongwe: Prepared for Primary Community Schools Project.

Kadzamira, E.C.,and M. Chibwana. 1999. *Gender and primary schooling in Malawi.* Brighton, Research Report 40, Forum for African Women Educationalists and the Institute of Development Studies, October.

Kelly, M.J. 2000. 'What HIV/AIDS can do to education and what education can do to HIV/AIDS'. Paper presented at the All Sub-Saharan Africa Conference on EFA. Johannesburg: 6–10th December.

King E.M., and M.A. Hill. 1993. *Women's education in developing countries: barriers, benefits and policies.* Washington, D.C: John Hopkins University Press for the World Bank.

Leach, F., V. Fiscian, E. Kadzamira, E. Lemani and P. Machakanja. 2002. An investigative study of the abuse of girls in African schools. Draft report for DFID, July.

Lewin, K. 2000. 'Secondary schooling in Malawi: the challenge of financing enrolment growth' in Lewin and Caillods, *Financing secondary education in developing countries: strategies for sustainable development.* Paris: IIEP/UNESCO.

Loskin, M.M., Glinskaya E., and M. Garcia. 2000. 'The effect of early childhood development programs on women's labour force participation and older children's schooling in Kenya'. World Bank Development Research Group. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, July.

Mingat, A. and B. Bruns. 2002. 'Financing education for all by 2015'. Draft (processed). Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

Norton A., Sibbons M., Smawfield D., and A. Gibbard. 2000. 'Mainstreaming gender through sector wide approaches in education – synthesis report'. London: Centre for Aid and Public Expenditure, Overseas Development Institute and Cambridge Education Consultants, October.

Obura, A.P. 1991. *Changing images: portrayal of girls and women in Kenyan textbooks.* Nairobi: African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) Press.

Odaga, A. and W. Heneveld. 1995. *Girls and schools in Sub-Saharan Africa: from analysis to action.* World Bank Technical Paper No.298. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

Penrose, P. 1998. *Cost sharing in education: public finance, school and household perspectives.* DFID Education Research Serial No. 27. London: DFID.

PROBE Team. 2000. *Public report on basic education in India.* Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Ramachandran, V. (ed.) 1998. *Bridging the gap between intention and action: girls' and women's education in South Asia.* New Delhi: ASPBAE and UNESCO, 1998.

Ramachandran, V. 2002. 'Gender and social equity in primary education: hierarchies of access'. Processed. New Delhi, January.

Raynor, J. 2000. Expanding girls' education in Bangladesh: a case study of the female stipend programme. MA thesis, Institute of Education, University of London, July.

Robb, J. [undated]. 'The GABLE social mobilisation campaign: final report'. Lilongwe: USAID, September.

Rose, P., G. Yoseph, A. Berihun and T. Nuresu. 1997. *Gender and primary schooling in Ethiopia*. IDS Research Report No. 31. Brighton: IDS, March.

Rose, P., and M. Tembon. 1997. 'Do girls and boys benefit equally as enrolments increase? Evidence from two African countries'. Oxford: paper presented at the conference on Education and Geopolitical Change.

Rose, P, and E.K. Kadzamira. 2000. 'Educational policy choice and policy practice in Malawi: dilemmas and disjunctures'. Social Policy Programme. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, January.

Rugh, A. 2000. *Starting now: strategies for helping girls to complete primary*. SAGE Technical Report No. 1. Washington, D.C.: Academy for Educational Development.

Secondary Review Team (SRT). 1999. 'Secondary Education Review'. Draft (processed). Lilongwe: Ministry of Education, May.

Singh, S. and R. Samara, 'Early marriage among women in developing countries', *International Family Planning Perspectives,* Vol. 22, No. 4, December 1996.

Smith, L. C. and L. Haddad. 2000. *Explaining child malnutrition in developing countries: A cross country analysis*. IFPRI Research Report. No.111. Washington, D.C.: International Food Policy Research Institute.

Stromquist, N.P. 1997. 'Gender sensitive educational strategies and their implementation'. *International Journal of Educational Development*. Vol. 17, No.2, pp. 205–214.

Subrahmanian, R. 2002. 'Gender and education; a review of issues for social policy'. UNRISD Social Policy and Development Paper No. 9. Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

Subrahmanian, R., Y. Sayed, S. Balagopalan and C. Soudien. 2003. Education inclusion and exclusion: Indian and South African perspectives. IDS Bulletin Vol. 34, No.1, January.

Swainson, N., S. Bendera, R. Gordon and E.C. Kadzamira. 1998. *Promoting girls' education in Africa: the design and implementation of policy interventions*. Education Research Serial No. 25. London: DFID.

Swainson, N. 2000 'Gender and primary schooling in Malawi'. Brighton: Consultancy report for DANIDA.

Tomasevski, K. 2003. *Education denied: costs and remedies*. London: Zed Books.

UNDP and UNICEF. 2002. 'The Millennium Development Goals in Africa.' Report prepared at the request of the G8 Personal Representatives for Africa. New York: UNDP, June.

UNESCO. 2002. *EFA global monitoring report: education for all – is the world on track?* Paris: UNESCO.

UNFPA. 2002. *State of World Population Report*. http://www.unfpa.org

USAID. 1999. 'More not better: an evaluation of USAID's programmes and policies to improve girls' Education'. Programmes and Operations Department, Report No.25. Washington, D.C.: USAID.

Vandemoortele, J. 2002. 'Are the MDGs Feasible?'. UNDP Bureau for Development Policy (processed). New York: UNDP, July.

Watkins, K. 2000. *The Oxfam Education Report*. Oxford: Oxfam.

Wazir, R. 2000. *The Gender Gap in Basic Education*. Delhi: Sage Publications.

World Bank. 1993. 'Staff Appraisal Report: Bangladesh Female Secondary School Assistance Project'. Population and Human Resources Division. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

World Bank. 1995. *Priorities and Strategies for Education: A World Bank Sector Review*. Education and Social Policy Department. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, May.

World Bank. 1997. 'Bangladesh Female Secondary School Assistance Project: Mid-term Report'. South Asia Office. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, July.

World Bank. 2002. 'A Chance for Every Child'. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

ANNEX 1
Recommendations from the country studies

Cambodia

There have been numerous lessons learned during recent efforts to implement educational development plans that improve gender equity. These can be translated into recommendations as follows:

1. **Need for more locally generated definitions of gender equity.** There is a need to rely more on locally defined concepts of gender equity to ensure that there is a consensus on what the concept means, and greater effectiveness in reconciling it with traditional gender roles. Stakeholders' consensus on commitment to gender equity is currently fragile because programme designs rely on very different understandings of gender equity, much of which is imported and alien to local stakeholders.

2. **Avoid stand-alone gender training interventions.** Promoting gender equity in the education sector can only be meaningful if it is sustained and coordinated with follow-up measures. The sector has not yet demonstrated adequate and sustained coordination between interventions that focus on attitude change (e.g. gender awareness training) and those that try to provide concrete applications of gender equity concepts (scholarships, life skills, etc.). Many stand-alone interventions in the past have not been characterised by a commitment to gender equity as a *process*. Interventions to promote gender equity should seek to be more comprehensive in approach, incorporating a range of complimentary interventions in one package, or if this is not possible, building in measures that ensure coordination with other programmes that can provide suitable follow-up.

3. **Need for improved focus on integrated investment strategies that balance the needs of women and girls.** The education sector has exhibited an investment imbalance that has placed considerable emphasis and resources on improving the education of girls who are still in the formal education system. Interventions focused on women and out-of-school girls, particularly in the NFE sub-sector, have been under-resourced. It is recommended that the Government and donors address this imbalance by acknowledging the comprehensive planning ideas put forth in the MoEYS EFA 2005 Plan and resourcing it accordingly.

4. **Improve focus on quality education as a means to motivate parents to send their daughters to school.** Overcrowded classrooms, talk and chalk teaching methods, and an irrelevant curriculum will undermine efforts to convince parents to send their daughters to school. It is strongly recommended that immediate steps be taken to introduce measures that will help upgrade teaching methodologies and improve curricular relevance, particularly through the development of life skills and prevocational provisions within the basic education system.

5. **Institutionalisation of gender equity sensitivities within MoEYS.** A promising start has been made in MoEYS to institutionalise gender advocacy, not only through the establishment of a Gender Working Group, but also by properly resourcing this office. The Ministry needs to move further to demonstrate that its commitment to gender issues is not tokenism, but real and sustained. An important place to start in demonstrating this commitment would be to move to accelerate the movement of women into management level positions at both headquarters and provincial level.

6. **Review some ESSP 2005 targets relating to improvements in gender equity.** MoEYS 2005 gender equity targets at primary level are not only laudable but, with extensive reforms in the educational system, also seem within reach. However, some official targets indicate no change in current access to education by girls/women, or in some cases, like the balance of male and female teacher training students, a decline in gender parity (from a GPI of 0.67 in 1999, to a projected 0.58 in 2005). Similarly, little change is expected in GPI levels at tertiary institutions (currently 0.297, projected to increase to only 0.31 in 2005) and transition rates among girls to upper secondary school (currently 66.1 per cent, projected to improve to only 67 per cent in 2005). These targets should be reviewed and revised to reflect more modest improvement.

7. **Increase the use of positive gender role models.** Using educated Cambodian women as positive role models can be a powerful tool to inspire motivation and stamina in young girls to improve themselves. The utilisation of this strategy should be increasingly incorporated in the programme designs seeking to promote gender equity in the education sector.

Ethiopia

1. In order to reach the rural and disadvantaged girls, more schools need to be located in the local community. For this, government, non-government and private organisations, and even more so the community, should take part to make community-based schools a reality.

2. Traditional practices, although some are common, are mostly location-specific. Therefore, measures to address the problem need solutions and strategies at the community level. Community leaders, elders, and religious people, all need to be given the skills to tackle it.

3. Enforcement of the law that is already in place should be put to practice, as a measure to reduce violence on women. The Government should implement what has been written in the law.

4. The Government and stakeholders should see to it that teachers are trained using child-centred approaches and that they receive the relevant teaching materials on time and in sufficient quantities. For this, serious follow up and monitoring is vital.

5. Schools differ according to the area in which they are situated; the climate, the harvest time, and the cultural setting. Therefore, schools should practice flexibility in their timing and programmes within the given standard. Any special community circumstance, household or farm chores should be taken into consideration.

6. To ease the burden of work at home and on the farm, the introduction of appropriate technology, with the support of other sectors, should be undertaken.

7. In order to get more positive female role models, more female teachers need to be trained. Mentoring programmes should be introduced to bring out these role models. This can be tried at school level with the support of the community.

8. Schools need to have tutorials, peer teaching, library facilities and reading materials and others that support students who have joined colleges through affirmative action.

9. There is now a poverty reduction strategy and a HIV/AIDS policy. The Government and civil society should make sure that this policy is put into practice. There are various interventions that can be done – again the commitment and consistent efforts of government and non-government organisations is needed.

India

1. **Ensure well-functioning and good quality schools.** As discussed in the preceding sections, the availability of well-functioning primary schools can surmount many barriers – most importantly, that of access. The notion of 'well-functioning' encompasses the following aspects:

   - **Cheerful and inviting ambience.** A cheerful and inviting ambience within classrooms encourages children to be expressive and creative.

   - **Retrained/qualified teachers.** The learning-teaching environment inside the classroom is often discouraging, particularly for children who are first-generation learners. Teachers need to be adequately trained, motivated and enthusiastic. Most importantly, efforts need to be made to ensure that teaching practices are equitable and devoid of gender discrimination.

   - **Reasonable teacher-pupil ratio.** One of the biggest barriers to retaining children in school has to do with teacher-pupil ratios. The ratios vary from 1:20 to almost 1:95 in many parts of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Schools with few teachers and even fewer classrooms continue to be a major impediment to primary education.

   - **Presence of women teachers.** A startling revelation of the EMIS data collected under the aegis of DPEP (1998), was that the majority of single-teacher and two-teacher schools in rural and remote areas do not even have one woman teacher. The proportion of women teachers goes down as we move up the grade ladder in school, with most middle and high schools in rural areas reporting an overwhelming proportion of male teachers.

   - **Availability of basic facilities.** Classrooms, blackboards, drinking water and toilets are today acknowledged as being essential for effective functioning of schools. The presence of a proper building (with a boundary wall) inspires greater confidence in the community, especially when it comes to sending their daughters to school.

This issue acquires a greater sense of urgency in regions that are characterised by extreme weather conditions, or prevailing insecurity with respect to girls and women.

2. **Assurance that children are learning.** A contentious issue that dogs education at all levels is the belief that children learn little in school. It is not uncommon to come across students who can barely read or write even after five to seven years of education. The inability of the school system to enable children to acquire basic reading, writing and cognitive skills is today acknowledged as the biggest barrier – especially for girls. Improving quality would involve a multi-pronged strategy of bringing about changes in curriculum, classroom transactions, teacher training, classroom environment, teacher attitudes and school-community linkages. Experience has shown that working on any one of these, without addressing related issues, does not lead to any significant improvement in the learning outcomes of children. This is particularly relevant for girls' education.

3. **Making education relevant.** What do parents and children perceive as 'quality'? Discussions with them during the course of recent field visits to Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, revealed that people use the word quality to signify both skill and relevance. Ensuring that education relates to the lives and circumstances of children, especially girls, essentially requires that the tools and cognitive abilities they acquire in the course of their schooling, enable them to negotiate an unequal world from a position of strength and confidence, which comes from the ability to access relevant information. This involves a range of learning, such as building on life knowledge and skills, enhancing self-esteem and confidence in inter-personal relationships, building capacity for critical thinking and analysis, encouraging curiosity and questioning, problem-solving, effective communication, creativity and aesthetic development.

4. **Backward and forward linkages:** It is quite evident from preceding sections, that existing government programmes and the facilities available in the private and non-government sector, do not really cater to the education needs of girls of different age groups. Despite good intentions, the prevailing system is primarily geared to the 6–11 years age group and is only now gradually extending to cover the 11–14 age group. While this is indeed commendable, the predicament of the 14+ age group needs urgent attention. Reports of literacy campaigns acknowledge the presence of adolescent girls, not only as literacy volunteers, but also as learners. Yet, no one seems really concerned about the learning needs of adolescent girls and young women.

"It is widely acknowledged that the presence of a group of demoralised/disillusioned youngsters, who may have either completed primary schooling or have dropped out, and who are underemployed or have no employment or productive work, acts as a strong disincentive for education of other children in the family/community. Younger children and their families see the writing on the wall – primary education does not significantly alter the life situation of poor and marginalised people in our society. It does not lead to any material gain, or for that matter, even unquantifiable value addition (nowadays called social capital)... This phenomenon is often referred to as the vacuum effect or suction effect – where absence of identifiable role models among the educated youth, leads to general disinterest towards formal education. Conversely, the presence of strong role models and positive images among the educated youth, acts as a propelling force, encouraging the community to invest in the education of their children. Investing in the meaningful education of the youth, giving them a reason to hope, and opportunities to develop as individuals and as a community, will pay rich dividends for the society as a whole. Linking education to empowerment (including enhancing their self-esteem/self-confidence), education to survival (for employment/self-employment),

education to better health and responsible sexuality, education to awareness of social, political and community issues, education to their rights as citizens and as young people (including rights of children) and mobilisation for community action. In short, what we need is real life education that equips young people to face emerging challenges with confidence." (Ramachandran, 1999)

Creating continuing education opportunities that link literacy and education to self-development and skill training, which in turn lead to greater bargaining power and self-esteem, is the need of the hour. Such a programme will act as a bridge between the girls and women, creating a positive environment for education and serving as an instrument for social change. While affirmative action by way of reservations and special provisions does have a role to play, it is more than evident that in the last 50 years, people from socially deprived communities (except for a tiny section), have remained at the bottom rung of the economic ladder. Indifferent educational institutions ensure that their literacy, numeracy, cognitive and critical thinking abilities remain poor. They enter adolescence with little hope and are quickly sucked into a battle for survival that leaves very little room for self-development. This reinforces prevalent notions about the inappropriateness of formal education, especially beyond the primary level. These linkages are therefore critical when it comes to girls' education – India cannot hope to make a breakthrough unless the entire chain that binds girls' education is addressed in totality. Piecemeal approaches have not worked in the past and are unlikely to do so in the future.

Malawi

The Malawi study clearly illustrates that it is possible to turn around an education system and make it more pro-poor and pro-women. Despite the initiatives of the 1990s, gender disparities still remain at all levels of schooling in Malawi. The following recommendations are aimed at addressing some shortfalls that the study has identified. They are presented thematically in order of priority.

1. Quality versus Quantity

The first generation reforms of abolishing primary school fees and expanding the provision of secondary education have, to a large extent, benefited girls and poor students. However, expansion of enrolment has been at the expense of quality. Currently, the education system is in a crisis where low quality is depressing demand, yet all the attention is on quantity. It is clear that if the quality of schooling is low, girls cannot benefit from the policy reforms. The quality of primary and secondary education could be improved through the following initiatives:

(i) Increased financing for teaching and learning materials, especially in the first four years of primary schooling, where a low quality school environment, characterised by inadequate facilities and learning materials, acts to push pupils, including girls, out of school.

(ii) The CDSSs have experienced tremendous expansion in the 1990s as a result of FPE. CDSSs enrol the majority of rural and secondary students, yet the CDSSs are characterised by low performance due to the limited amount of resources they receive from the Government compared with the CSS. As a matter of social justice, it is imperative that funding for CDSS should be increased in order to greatly improve the quality of learning in these schools and bring them to the same level as that of the CSS. This would also help address the gender equity commitments that the Government has made, since CDSS enrolls more female students than CSS.

2. Persistence in School

Malawi's primary school system is very inefficient, characterised by low promotion rates, high dropout rates, and high repetition rates, all of which contribute to the low survival of pupils. It has been shown in the study that dropout rates are very high and are unlikely to come down in the near future.

(i) In order for the benefits of FPE to be sustained, efforts should be made to look into the possibility of incorporating flexible (bridge) and/ or non-formal educational provision for out-of-school youth and/or over-age pupils. It is also important to strengthen educational initiatives outside school systems such as adult education and literacy programmes, including community schools for those missed out of the mainstream school system. These initiatives would help address the problem of low literacy and low educational attainment amongst women and girls in Malawi, most of whom tend to drop out of the formal educational system.

(ii) Educational reforms could be further strengthened if they were linked to other programmes. For example, the community-based childcare programme (CBCC) currently under the Ministry of Gender and Community Services, could be strengthened so that it helps mitigate the need for girls' labour to help care for siblings, one of the reasons that has been cited as responsible for girls' absenteeism and later dropping out from school. This is even more critical now with the HIV/AIDS pandemic, since in the case of a family member or a mother getting ill, girls are called upon to act as surrogate mothers for their siblings. This keeps the girls away from school.

(iii) On the question of the lack of role models for girls, especially in rural areas, community-based primary and secondary schools should be encouraged to employ more teachers from within localities and that where possible, incentives should be provided to encourage female teachers to work in rural areas. Experience working in rural areas could be used as a factor when decisions concerning promotion are being made.

(iv) It has been illustrated that sexual harassment and abuse, as well as pregnancies, are some of the factors leading to high dropout rates for girls. For sexual harassment that happens within the school, it is imperative that disciplinary regulations applicable to sexual harassment are enforced, irrespective of whether the perpetrator is a fellow pupil/student or a teacher. For cases of pregnancy, every effort should be made to encourage girls who drop out of school because of pregnancy, to return to school after giving birth.

3. HIV/AIDS

Though enrolment rates have so far not gone down due to HIV/AIDS, it is important to put in place mechanisms for prevention of transmission and mitigation of the impacts of the pandemic.

(i) A counseling system at the school level should be rejuvenated to provide academic and pastoral support for needy children, particularly orphans.

(ii) The HIV/AIDS curriculum should be revised and strengthened so that it gets the serious attention that it deserves from teachers as well as students. Teachers should be empowered with skills that will enable them to handle the issue with competence.

(iii) A bursary scheme should be established for all needy students, in which orphans will receive top priority. The scheme could cover tuition waivers as well as additional funds to cover the extra costs of schooling.

4. Performance in Examinations

A university education has the highest private returns. Access to tertiary and other forms of training is largely based on performance at PSLCE, JCE and MSCE examinations. The expansion of enrolment in the 1990s has brought about a significant deterioration in performance, especially at MSCE level where the gender gaps are conspicuous. Girls' performance is generally lower than that of boys for national examinations, thus reducing the pool from which girls for the subsequent level are drawn.

(i) The current curriculum is academically-oriented and is centred on rote learning rather than application. National examinations are taken as key measures of a student's capability in a subject matter. And yet it is commonly known that an examination on its own is not foolproof, it is certainly not the most objective way of assessment, and it tends to marginalise certain groups in society, such as girls and poor people. There is therefore a need to revisit the current system of assessment so that a number of new assessment methods can be adopted in order to enable students get a broader basis for producing their best.

(ii) There is need for research to look into why girls perform badly in national examinations, especially in science and mathematics.

(iii) In view of the persistent pattern of low performance in examinations, the general perception is that outcomes of education are not beneficial unless pupils attend secondary schooling where the benefits become noticeable at the individual level. The education system should be structured in such a way that outcomes of schooling become tangible at each and every level by, for example, creating forward linkages with the wider economy through the provision of technical and vocational skills, rather than the current academic orientation from which a small proportion of the population benefits.

Mali

1. Re-vitalise the commitments and the quality of intervention of civil society organisations to be a force for the implementation of Mali's positive and gender equitable education policies.

2. Require the assignment of human resources to Girls' Education units/programmes/projects (governmental and non-governmental) to be based on professional expertise and personnel commitment to the vision and goals of girls' education and not, as is currently too often the case, on considerations of automatic promotion or other bureaucratic procedures for filling imposed space (this applies to all levels as it is manifest both in the Ministry of Education, NGO education projects, and in village-level parent-teacher associations).

3. Initiate Education Watch efforts to track the interface of gender concerns with the implementation of education policies and in the creation of bodies charged with implementing these policies:

    - controls on administrative status of girls' education units within macro level institutions;

    - select, on the basis of types of attitudes towards community reform, those commissioned to work on education reform (have a contingency for avoiding the recruitment or assignment of responsibilities to those who have conformist positions on gender/society/education);

    - increase the number of women assigned to the Ministry of Education Curriculum Unit charged with creating the new reform curriculum, and assure the presence of transformist visions of gender/society/education among those women;

    - offer to the Curriculum Unit the services of gender equity professionals who will have developed guidelines and materials for integrating gender equity concerns into Mali's new curriculum (Grades 1–9); in other words, we should not rely solely on training those charged with designing the new curriculum, their task is already daunting, but we should have a unit working parallel to them, commissioned to develop certain parts of the curriculum with a gender-positive focus;

    - changing the image of women and girls in school teaching and learning materials, in both formal and non-formal education;

    - favorable hiring and maintenance policies for women teachers.

4. Create a progressive network of institutions that work on gender equity; many networks currently operate in Mali, but they are not progressive.

5. Promote a Girls' Education Act which will legalise protection for girls in schools in order that they may remain in school, or in alternative training programmes.

6. Involve girls/young women themselves as actors in the movement for girls' education by developing and adequately funding programmes that put them in positions of continuing their own education/training/employment, while mobilising them for visible roles in the movement.

7. Capitalise on the myriad of youth organisations that exist to train and recruit young people themselves in promoting gender equity, within their own associations and clubs, in schools and in other social institutions (involve youth themselves as actors and encourage them to develop organisations with progressive gender practices and gender equity outreach).

8. Maintain media focus on girls' education (positive example of Oxfam social advertising during the African Cup of Nations soccer television coverage in 2001).

9. Create a media focus concerning women/girls and HIV/AIDS prevention.

10. Pilot gender equity alert systems in Mali's 'Human Rights Consensual Cities' (Kati and Timbuktu) as models that can be extended to other areas (example: alerts for lack of quality schooling; violence against

women; legal rights counseling; HIV prevention, etc.).

Finally, we propose that the 2003 Week of Action in Mali takes on the critical focus of Equity in Education, and Reform of Education means Community Reform highlighting gender concerns. We propose promoting, through a series of visible actions, the formula: Access to Education = Equity = Quality Education.

We recommend that the Week of Action in Mali implements the Urgent Actions outlined in the Lobbying Strategic Action Plan submitted to OGB/Mali by a commission of education organisations (February 2003).
Those Urgent Actions are:

- the identification of approximately 1,000 girls who passed entrance exams into high school last year, but this year were not admitted due to their age (19 and older), and determination of continued schooling/training options for them;
- analysis of types and conditions of financial and technical support to Mali's education reform being offered by international aid organisations;
- draft legislation for the Girls' Education Act guaranteeing legal protection;

- review CPS statistics and analyse gender dis-aggregated data for inconsistencies and lacks;
- continuing education of classroom teachers to train them to use gender-equitable practices, national language instruction and active methods in their classrooms;
- revisions to Pedagogie Convergente materials to promote conscientious gender equity themes (prior to wider distribution to meet demand for these materials as more and more first grade classrooms are transformed to PC);
- outreach to teacher training institutions (those training primary and secondary school teachers) for integration of gender equity into new teacher training curriculums;
  - solicit letters of intent for these institutions to look at the problem;
  - draft short-term action plans to define how they will look at the problem;
  - mobilise education expertise to meet with these institutions to determine what work needs to be commissioned in order to make changes to their teacher training curriculum.

Nepal

1. Parents' participation in SMCs should be encouraged and the involvement of the backward classes to be promoted.

2. Schools should help to raise awareness of the need for, and benefits of, a good education. This effort should be institutionalised as part of training given to school teachers, resource staff and supervisors.

3. Local language studies should be given priority in the school curriculum.

4. Schools should have quotas for enrolment for those children that belong to the Dalits. There is a scholarship that is given to poor students, the award of which is currently dependent upon the whims and fancies of the headteacher. In past studies it has been proved that sometimes the scholarships are divided, as the amount is not commensurate to the demand for concessions. This dilutes the initiative and does not help the recipients in any way.

5. As also discussed in the BPEP donor mission meetings (November 2001), it is recommended that awareness and social mobilisation should begin at the ward level. It would be beneficial to involve women leaders of the corresponding wards.

At household and family level

1. Awareness programmes to be created and shown to parents, children, local leaders and community members on the value of educating girls using audio-visual methods such as street play, posters, radio communication dramas, tele-films, local songs and street processions.

2. Gender-sensitisation training according to the socio-cultural environment of the community.

3. Child-care centre in the community, so that the girls can be free from taking care of small siblings, and go to school.

At school level

1. Gender-sensitive textbooks, teaching materials and teaching methods are required.

2. Gender-sensitisation training among teachers, headteachers, supervisors, resource staff, SMC members, and district education officials is needed. Provision of comfortable, non-traditional and girl-friendly uniforms.

3. Special programme of counseling and life skills to be made available to girls.

Incentive programme

1. Increase the number of scholarship quotas in non-remote districts for the girls.

2. Provision of uniforms, stationery, midday meals, and other incentives according to the needs of the community.

3. Proper dissemination of information about the number and types of incentive programmes implemented in the district. For this, parent-teacher interaction programes should be conducted. Through the use of local newspapers, local leaders, youth members (especially females), and female health workers can be appointed.

4. Proper and timely distribution of textbooks from the school.

5. No intervention from the local elite and political leaders for the distribution of scholarship.

6. Increase the proportion of budget for girls' and women's education programmes.

7. Encourage community ownership in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the incentives programmes. Timely programme/budget allocation by district and centre-level authorities.

8. Current pilot scheme of compulsory primary education should be extended to more districts.

Female teachers

1. Increase the number of female teacher quotas by mobilising local graduates and feeder hostel graduates.

2. Residence, child-care and health facilities should be provided for the female teachers.

3. Policy advocacy for permanent employment for female teachers.

Physical facilities

1. Provide adequate physical facilities such as toilets and classrooms.

2. Sufficient classrooms with adequate seats for girls.

3. Create a safe and enabling environment for girls to complain and discuss their needs and priorities.

4. Allocate resource for research and studies.

Different experiences and research studies have already proven that the increase in participation of females in education and their socio-economic development has a direct correlation with the overall development of the country.

Involve women in the preparation of policy, plans and programmes so that the policy, plan and programme are workable and progressive.

1. Continue to monitor and evaluate the programme.

2. Gender-sensitive curriculum and textbooks.

3. Recruit more female teachers, supervisors and administrators.

4. Functional, non-formal, basic education must be promoted on a priority basis for the out- of-school girls and women.

5. All women's literacy programmes must have saving and credit associations. The adult women should be given parenting education so as to promote their daughters' education. NGOs should be encouraged to establish and manage cooperative formal schools of all levels for girls and women.

6. All the girls' incentive programmes such as scholarship, hostel facilities, free textbooks, free uniforms and midday meals, should be reviewed from time to time to make them more effective and to ensure that the needy and deserving students are benefiting from them.

7. It is found that illiterate women become victims of girls trafficking in Nepal. Therefore, there must be a special programme for those areas where the problem is most rife. Those girls who have been infected with HIV and AIDS due to this illegal practice should be rehabilitated with proper treatment and education in order to be self-reliant.

8. Husbands/fathers should be provided with proper education to understand how women's education will help to enhance family welfare through better nutrition, family planning, environmental conservation, etc.

Nigeria

In order to forge ahead on EFA programmes which affect women and girls, it is recommended that:

1. Funds from donor agencies are used judiciously for what they are intended. Activities and funding by donor agencies should be properly integrated to achieve set goals through efficient networking.

2. Construction of girl-friendly toilets in schools, increase extra curricular activities that will make school attractive for girls.

3. The issue of financing education is fundamental to achieving the set goals of improving the educational status of girls. There is a need to work closely with the private sector and the International Development Partners to generate funding required for education. The growth rate in Nigeria's population, compared to the revenue, cannot possibly allow for the Government alone to fund the process, and this may continue to lead to the marginalisation of girls.

4. The inspectorate departments at both Federal and State levels need to be overhauled if we are to experience an increase in the enrolment and retention of girls in schools in Nigeria. Parents and guardians should be fully involved in girls' education initiatives, particularly in rural communities so that their interest can be taken into consideration. In Northern states, focus should be given to the possibility of infusing western-style education into quranic education, as this might be the only opportunity for some girls to receive an education in that locality. This system has already been adopted in states such as Sokoto and Kebbi, with much success under the National Commission for mass literacy. Most girls in these schools are between the ages of 13 and 18.

5. Teacher's salaries must receive attention if they are to give maximum support to the process of delivering quality education at all levels. There are too many overcrowded classrooms. In Edo State, it was noted that in most public primary schools there are five teachers each with a classroom of 100 pupils. There is absolutely no way a child can learn in such an environment. Parents would rather keep their girls at home than leave them to go and sit in classes where they can hardly learn. That is the prevailing situation in most public primary and secondary schools in Nigeria.

6. Parent/Teacher Associations and Old Student Associations are to be encouraged at both primary and secondary school levels, with mothers' participation encouraged. Opportunities to be provided for local people, particularly women and children, to contribute to developing local strategies for enhancing girls'/women's participation.

7. Women role models to visit schools, hold talks with girls and have regular discussions with girls on peace education, HIV/AIDS, and all other issues that will enlighten female students. These should be held as informal sessions in all schools at primary and secondary levels.

8. States recording high dropout and decreasing enrolment rates of boys should be assisted. There should be an accelerated campaign to communicate the benefits of education to both parents and their wards. (Anambra, Abia, Eboyin and most states in the north where there is high prevalence of Almajiris).

9. Existing laws forbidding early marriage and withdrawals from school should be reviewed in order to make them more enforceable, more practical and real. The basic rights of girls should be promoted with particular emphasis on their access rights to education.

10. National Orientation Agency should take the lead in the Enlightenment Campaign that should be taken to all urban and rural communities in Nigeria. Relevant jingles and other related materials are to be used for the campaigns. The Media should be co-opted into this campaign for a wider reach. Talk shows and competitions at community levels to be organised on

topics or subjects that will highlight the importance of girls' education.

11. The curriculum of schools should be revised and be gender-sensitive, along with teaching materials and textbooks, to improve the self-image of girls and promote opportunities for females. Introduction of Gender Studies in schools from primary to university level, for both sexes, to help facilitate changes in attitude towards females. Providing effective strategies for teachers that will make them gender-sensitive in their teaching. Awards to be given to deserving teachers and regular training and retraining programmes for primary and secondary school teachers to be provided. The issue of apathy on the part of teachers will continue if their salaries are not paid as and when they are due. Pressure groups and major stakeholders should focus on executive and legislative areas of government to improve the allocation of funds to the education sector.

12. It is important for the Federal Office of Statistics to conduct an in-depth study of the transition of girls from primary to secondary schools and the empirical situation report on the number of out-of-school, school aged girls.

13. Project monitoring, evaluation and inspectorate units should be further empowered to ensure judicious use of funds and better management. Also, communities should be allowed to play a greater role in the monitoring and evaluation process.

Pakistan

1. The government, at federal, provincial, and district levels, may be encouraged and induced to make political and financial commitments to provide appropriate schools and appropriately educated and trained teachers for girls, as required, to reduce gender disparity in education.

2. A periodical and regular monitoring system may be put in place for reporting progress and gaps in the education of children, especially of girls.

3. Wherever required, teachers for girls' schools should be provided with residential facilities, security, and special financial incentives for those posted away from their hometowns.

4. The girls' schools should be in close proximity to their homes so that they are able to walk to school and so that their parents and family feel secure about their safety.

5. Mothers of school age girls should be involved in the 'process of education'. There should be a simultaneous programme, preferably within the school, for mothers' literacy and some useful skills training. It would create an atmosphere of education in the community, a sense of ownership of girls' education and incentives for the family to educate their daughters.

6. Primary education of five years may be immediately converted to eight years of elementary education so that the students not only acquire sustainable literacy skills, but are also able to enter into some semi-skilled training programme or profession, if they are not able to continue on to secondary education.

7. Many times girls are not sent to school because they help their mothers in household chores and look after their younger siblings. The schools may provide playgroup facilities for the younger siblings of the school age girls so that the mothers of these girls are not burdened with looking after young children.

ANNEX 2
Additional tables

Annex 2 table 1: Gross intake rates for primary schooling 1999/2000 (percentage points)

REGION	GIRLS> BOYS	BOYS>GIRLS				
		0-5	5 to 10	10 to 20	20-30	>30
South and West Asia	Sri Lanka	Bangladesh			India	
Sub-Saharan Africa	DRC	Botswana	Angola	Burkina Faso	Chad	Benin
	Lesotho	Congo	Gambia	Burundi		Guinea Bissau
	Mauritius	Rwanda	Ghana	Cameroon		Ethiopia
	Namibia	Senegal	Guinea	Comoros		Liberia
	Zambia	Sierra Leone	Kenya	CAR		
		South Africa	Madagascar	Cote d'Ivoire		
		Swaziland		Eritrea		
		Tanzania		**Mali**		
		Zimbabwe		Mozambique		
				Niger		
				Togo		
Middle East and North Africa	Bahrain	Algeria	Morocco	Iraq	Yemen	
	Iran	Egypt	Syria			
	Jordan	Kuwait				
	Tunisia	Lebanon				
		Oman				
		Qatar				
		Saudia Arabia				
East Asia and the Pacific	China	Malaysia	**Cambodia**	Lao		
	South Korea	Vietnam	Indonesia			
			PNG			
			Philippines			
	Mynamar		Thailand			
Latin America and the Caribbean	Bolivia	Chile	Guatemala			
	Colombia	Ecuador	Nicaragua			
	Costa Rica	El Salvador				
	Guyana	Panama				
	Mexico	Paraguay				
	Peru	Venezuela				
	Uruguay					

Annex 2 table 2: Educational attainment for 15-19 year olds (percentages)

| | | | NO SCHOOLING | | | | COMPLETED PRIMARY | | | | GENDER GAP
COMPLETED GRADE 9 | | | |
| | | | Female | | Male | | Female | | Male | | | | | |
	YEAR	Primary cycle	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA														
Benin	1996		79.3	42.1	49.5	22.9	4.2	22.7	16.5	40.4	0.5	8.1	3.6	14.9
Burkina Faso	1999		90.8	34.4	75.7	19.2	4.5	52.5	11.9	66.3	0.4	17.2	1.5	26.9
Cameroon	1998		23.9	11.2	17.3	5.8	42	73.3	47.4	74	16.3	45.4	14.4	42.5
Cote d'Ivoire	1999		64.3	36.5	45.4	19.5	13.7	46.9	30.1	63.1	2.2	21.9	6.1	31.3
Ethiopia	2000		76.8	23.7	58	9.7	0.8	34.4	1.6	43.9	0.2	21.4	0.7	27.7
Ghana	1998		18.2	10	11.9	5.5	63.9	81.9	70.3	84.6	30.5	52.5	35.1	56
Guinea	1999		86.4	44.7	63.6	17.5	4.6	28.2	16.6	49.7	0.8	9.9	3.6	15.4
Kenya	1998		3.5	4.4	3.4	3	53.1	74.3	51.7	80	14.7	31.8	15.2	42.4
Madagascar	1997	6 to 10	31.2	13.6	19.8	14.6	16.7	52.7	15.6	56	1.9	19.5	2.2	17.3
Mali	1996		89.7	55.8	77.9	36.5	3.1	26	6.7	42.7	0.4	2.5	0.5	3.9
Malawi	2000		31	10.7	11.6	5.3	4.2	36.5	5.9	33.9	1.6	20.4	1.2	11.1
Mozambique	1997	6 to 10	47.2	16.3	18.7	8.5	17	48.3	29.8	65.4	0.1	4.9	0.6	5.5
Niger	1998	7 to 12	90.6	40.1	72.3	27.3	5.9	49.1	18.5	60.4	0.2	12.2	1.4	19.5
Nigeria	1999		32.1	14.6	20.1	7.4	57.5	79.1	70.3	87.8	26.8	50.5	33.1	60.6
Tanzania	1999		24.6	4.2	13.1	10.6	36.4	69.3	42.7	56.8	2	14	1	12.5
Togo	1998	6 to 11	40.4	20.5	16.6	5	11	37.2	28.3	62.4	0.5	7.1	5.1	12.2
Uganda	2000		11.4	4.1	3.5	2.4	30	65.2	30.5	65.8	11.8	38.7	11.7	36.8
Zambia	1997		14.6	4.2	12.2	2.8	28.2	65.2	28.6	67.1	4.9	23.3	4.3	24.7
Zimbabwe	1999		3.1	1.1	2	0.8	76.3	96.6	73.7	95.1	39.4	75.3	36	77.5
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA														
Egypt	2000		18	6.5	8.4	4.1	64	88.3	82.5	88..8	40.4	65.6	48.9	60.2
SOUTH AND WEST ASIA														
Bangladesh	1997		32.5	10.9	15.2	11	48.7	65	54	76.1	16.3	38.8	20.9	44.8
India	1999		37	12.3	16.1	7.7	45.8	75.8	66.3	80.3	25.7	54.5	39.2	56.3
Nepal	1996		55.7	21.4	20.6	8.1	32	70.1	61.9	79.3	12.2	44.9	23.2	44.3
Pakistan	1990		73.5	26.8	35.1	18.4	21	66.6	54.1	75	6	36.6	21.1	44.8
EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC														
Cambodia	2000		11.6	9.4	12.9	5.4	25.1	58.6	36.4	67.2	5.2	29.8	10.3	38.3
Indonesia														
Philippines	1998	6 to 11	1.6	0.8	2.5	0.8	88	95.6	77.6	91.6	51.3	64.4	34.7	57.4
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN														
Brazil	1996	7 to 10	4.9	1.5	12	3.4	67.6	89.4	56.2	82.2	8.1	30.1	4.3	21.9
Colombia		6 to 10	2.3	0.9	2	1.6	75.2	93.7	70.5	92.2	27	61.6	20.4	56.8
Guatemala	1999	7 to 12	20.8	10.9	16.3	4.3	36.8	68.3	38.8	76.8	15	38.3	10.1	39.6
Nicaragua	1999	7 to 12	16.3	4.5	22.1	5.6	42.1	80	34	75.4	10.6	40.3	8.6	32.4
Peru	2000	6 to 11	3.3	0.8	0.9	0.5	95.7	95.3	79.7	95.7	31.4	73.7	37.2	71.1

no schooling, urban	no schooling, rural	primary urban	primary rural	grade 9 urban	grade 9 rural	Total difference	m/f gap among never-attenders	m/f gap among primary leavers	m/f gap among secondary leavers
19.2	29.8	17.7	12.3	6.8	3.1	88.9	49	30	9.9
15.2	15.1	13.8	7.4	9.7	1.1	62.3	30.3	21.2	10.8
5.4	6.6	0.7	5.4	-2.9	-1.9	13.3	12	6.1	-4.8
17	18.9	16.2	16.4	9.4	3.9	81.8	35.9	32.6	13.3
14	18.8	9.5	0.8	6.3	0.5	49.9	32.8	10.3	6.8
4.5	6.3	2.7	6.4	3.5	4.6	28	10.8	9.1	8.1
27.2	22.8	21.5	12	5.5	2.8	91.8	50	33.5	8.3
1.4	0.1	5.7	-1.4	10.6	0.5	16.9	1.5	4.3	11.1
-1	11.4	3.3	-1.1	-2.2	0.3	10.7	10.4	2.2	-1.9
19.3	11.8	16.7	3.6	1.4	0.1	52.9	31.1	20.3	1.5
5.4	19.4	-2.6	1.7	-9.3	-0.4	14.2	24.8	-0.9	-9.7
7.8	28.5	17.1	12.8	0.6	0.5	67.3	36.3	29.9	1.1
12.8	18.3	11.3	12.6	7.3	1.2	63.5	31.1	23.9	8.5
7.2	12	8.7	12.8	10.1	6.3	57.1	19.2	21.5	16.4
-6.4	11.5	-12.5	6.3	-1.5	-1	-3.6	5.1	-6.2	-2.5
15.5	23.8	25.2	17.3	5.1	4.6	91.5	39.3	42.5	9.7
1.7	7.9	0.6	0.5	-1.9	-0.1	8.7	9.6	1.1	-2
1.4	2.4	1.9	0.4	1.4	-0.6	6.9	3.8	2.3	0.8
0.3	1.1	-1.5	-2.6	2.2	-3.4	-3.9	1.4	-4.1	-1.2
2.4	9.6		18.5	-5.4	8.5	33.6	12	18.5	3.1
-0.1	17.3	11.1	5.3	6	4.6	44.2	17.2	16.4	10.6
4.6	20.9	4.5	20.5	1.8	13.5	65.8	25.5	25	15.3
13.3	35.1	9.2	29.9	-0.6	11	97.9	48.4	39.1	10.4
8.4	38.4	8.4	33.1	8.2	15.1	111.6	46.8	41.5	23.3
4	-1.3	8.6	11.3	8.5	5.1	36.2	2.7	19.9	13.6
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	-0.9	-4	-10.4	-7	-16.6	-38.9	-0.9	-14.4	-23.6
-1.9	-7.1	-7.2	-11.4	-8.2	-3.8	-39.6	-9	-18.6	-12
-0.7	0.3	-1.5	-4.7	-4.8	-6.6	-18	-0.4	-6.2	-11.4
6.6	4.5	8.5	2	1.3	-4.9	18	11.1	10.5	-3.6
-1.1	-5.8	-4.6	-8.1	-7.9	-2	-29.5	-6.9	-12.7	-9.9
0.3	2.4	0.4	-16	-2.6	5.8	-9.7	2.7	-15.6	3.2

Annex 2 table 3: Education attainment gender gaps (percentage points)

	No education		Completed primary		Grade 9		Total
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA							
Benin	19.2	29.8	17.7	12.3	6.8	3.1	88.9
Burkina Faso	15.2	15.1	13.8	7.4	9.7	1.1	62.3
Cameroon	5.4	6.6	0.7	5.4	−2.9	−1.9	13.3
Cote d'Ivoire	17	18.9	16.2	16.4	9.4	3.9	81.8
Ethiopia	14	18.8	9.5	0.8	6.3	0.5	49.9
Ghana	4.5	6.3	2.7	6.4	3.5	4.6	28
Guinea	27.2	22.8	21.5	12	5.5	2.8	91.8
Kenya	1.4	0.1	5.7	−1.4	10.6	0.5	16.9
Madagascar	−1	11.4	3.3	−1.1	−2.2	0.3	10.7
Mali	19.3	11.8	16.7	3.6	1.4	0.1	52.9
Malawi	5.4	19.4	−2.6	1.7	−9.3	−0.4	14.2
Mozambique	7.8	28.5	17.1	12.8	0.6	0.5	67.3
Niger	12.8	18.3	11.3	12.6	7.3	1.2	63.5
Nigeria	7.2	12	8.7	12.8	10.1	6.3	57.1
Tanzania	−6.4	11.5	−12.5	6.3	−1.5	−1	−3.6
Togo	15.5	23.8	25.2	17.3	5.1	4.6	91.5
Uganda	1.7	7.9	0.6	0.5	−1.9	−0.1	8.7
Zambia	1.4	2.4	1.9	0.4	1.4	−0.6	6.9
Zimbabwe	0.3	1.1	−1.5	−2.6	2.2	−3.4	−3.9
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA							
Egypt	2.4	9.6		18.5	−5.4	8.5	33.6
SOUTH AND WEST ASIA							
Bangladesh	−0.1	17.3	11.1	5.3	6	4.6	44.2
India	4.6	20.9	4.5	20.5	1.8	13.5	65.8
Nepal	13.3	35.1	9.2	29.9	−0.6	11	97.9
Pakistan	8.4	38.4	8.4	33.1	8.2	15.1	111.6
EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC							
Cambodia	4	−1.3	8.6	11.3	8.5	5.1	36.2
Indonesia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Philippines	0	−0.9	−4	−10.4	−7	−16.6	−38.9
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN							
Brazil	−1.9	−7.1	−7.2	−11.4	−8.2	−3.8	−39.6
Colombia	−0.7	0.3	−1.5	−4.7	−4.8	−6.6	−18
Guatemala	6.6	4.5	8.5	2	1.3	−4.9	18
Nicaragua	−1.1	−5.8	−4.6	−8.1	−7.9	−2	−29.5
Peru	0.3	2.4	0.4	−16	−2.6	5.8	−9.7

Annex 2 table 4: Percentage change in primary schooling GER gender gap 1990–1999/2000

REGION	INCREASE		DECREASE			
	0 to 10		10 to 25	25 to 50	50-100	100<
South and West Asia				India	Bangladesh	
					Nepal	
Sub-Saharan Africa	Ethiopia	Burkina Faso	Angola	Comoros	Kenya	Malawi
	Lesotho	Burundi	Benin	Ghana	DRC	Rwanda
	Madagascar	Cameroon	Chad	Mali	Gambia	Tanzania
	Mozambique	Cote d'Ivoire	Guinea	Mauritius	Sierra Leone	
	Namibia		Eritrea	Niger		
	South Africa		CAR	Nigeria		
	Swaziland			Togo		
	Zimbabwe			Uganda		
				Zambia		
				Senegal		
				Sudan		
Middle East and North Africa	Iraq		Djibouti	Algeria	Egypt	
				Morocco	Mauritania	
					Oman	
					Tunisia	
					Iran	
					Kuwait	
					Saudia Arabia	
					UAE	
East Asia and the Pacific	Indonesia		Lao		Mynamar	China
			PNG			Korea
Latin America and the Caribbean	Brazil		Panama	Bolivia		El Salvador
	Chile			Mexico		Venezuela
	Colombia					
	Costa Rica					
	Nicaragua					
	Paraguay					
	Uruguay					

Annex 2 table 5: Percentage change in secondary schooling GER gender gap 1990-1999/2000

REGION	INCREASE	DECREASE				
		0 to 10	10 to 25	25 to 50	50-100	100<
South and West Asia		Pakistan	India	Nepal		Bangladesh
				Sri Lanka		
Sub-Saharan Africa	Benin	Burkina Faso	Angola	Burundi	Kenya	Madagascar
	Botswana	South Africa	DRC	Gambia	Niger	Mauritius
	Chad	Cote d'Ivoire	Zimbabwe	Namibia	Tanzania	Sudan
	Eritrea		Nigeria	Cameroon	Rwanda	Swaziland
	Guinea			Comoros		
	Malawi			Ethiopia		
	Mali			Ghana		
	Mozambique			Zambia		
	Togo					
Middle East and North Africa	Jordan		Mauritania		Bahrain	Algeria
	Qatar		Morocco		Egypt	Djibouti
	UAE		Saudia Arabia		Iran	Kuwait
			Iraq		Syria	Tunisia
East Asia and the Pacific	Lao				Cambodia	Philippines
	PNG				Indonesia	Thailand
	Malaysia				South Korea	
					Mynamar	
Latin America and the Caribbean	Brazil	Bolivia	Nicaragua		Chile	Belize
	Colombia	Venezuela				El Salvador
	Costa Rica					
	Mexico					
	Panama					
	Paraguay					

Annex 2 table 6: Gross enrolment ratios for early education and child care 1999/2000

Country	Girls	Boys
Bangladesh	25.2	22.4
India	29.9	30.1
Nepal		
Pakistan	4.8	13.6
Cambodia	5.7	5.4
Ethiopia	1.7	1.8
Malawi		
Mali	2.9	1.9
Nigeria		