GENDER EQUALITY IN AND THROUGH EDUCATION

Over the past 30 years, increasing numbers of children have been able to access quality education — but many children of different genders*, and marginalized learners in particular, still face systemic, gender-based and social disparities.

GENDER PARITY IN ENROLMENT

Gender parity in primary and lower secondary education enrolment was achieved in most of the world in 2009. It **has not been achieved** at any level of education in 4 of 5 regions of Africa. **More girls are still out of school than boys.**[1]

GENDER PARITY IN COMPLETION

Globally there is gender parity in completion rates, at primary and lower secondary level – but as of 2020, **96 male learners completed** upper secondary school for every 100 female learners.[2]

BOYS ARE MORE LIKELY THAN GIRLS TO REPEAT PRIMARY GRADES IN 130 OF THE 142 COUNTRIES WITH DATA ON THIS TOPIC.[3]

INTERSECTIONALITY AND DISCRIMINATION

Gender intersects with other characteristics that can negatively affect access to or completion of education — e.g. ability, ethnicity and poverty. In many low- and lower-middle-income countries, **the poorest youth experience significant gender inequality.**[4]

9 OUT OF 10 CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ARE EXCLUDED FROM FORMAL EDUCATION. THE MAJORITY OF THEM ARE GIRLS.[5]

TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS CONTAINING GENDER STEREOTYPES

In many countries, curricula and learning materials still include negative gender stereotypes and other discriminatory content and teachers are not trained in gender-transformative pedagogy.

24%
OF TEXT AND IMAGES IN TEXTBOOKS FEATURED FEMALE CHARACTERS IN PUNJAB PROVINCE, PAKISTAN.[6]

SUBJECTS DOMINATED BY ONE GENDER

Male students are overrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. Girls' interest in and confidence in their ability to study STEM subjects declines when they are taught by teachers with implicit biases.

SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Worldwide, an estimated **246 million children of all genders** experience school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) driven by unequal gender norms every year.[7]

<25%
OF JOBS IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND ICT WERE HELD BY WOMEN IN 2022.[8]

20%
OF TECHNOLOGY POSITIONS IN COMPANIES WERE HELD BY WOMEN IN 2022.[9]

The education system needs scalable and evidence-based gender-responsive models to help it achieve gender equality in and through education.

From 2020 to 2024, GPE KIX supported six research projects to develop, test and scale gender-responsive models to improve access, quality and learning outcomes for girls and other marginalized learners.

The models were:

- Strategies to dismantle gender biases and stereotypes
- Gender and inclusive pedagogies (GIP)
- Networked improved communities (NICs) with school leaders
- The FAWE Gender-Responsive School Model
- SRGVB prevention practices
- The Learner Guide program

6 research projects

20 countries

20+ southern-based implementing organizations

6 gender-responsive models

Countries in which GPE KIX research projects were implemented

Following their assessment of contextualized gender-responsive models, GPE KIX projects observed positive outcomes for learners, teachers, school leaders, parents, communities and education systems.

Results: Individual, household and community levels | Results: Educational institution level | Results: Policy level

1 Increased retention and attendance in school

In Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and Senegal, 82.8% of the girls in the schools that leveraged the FAWE Gender-Responsive School Model said it encouraged them to stay in school.

In Bangladesh, after teachers received GIP training, secondary school students with disabilities were provided with EdTech and their attendance improved.

2 Enhanced education outcomes and soft skills

In Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, the Learner Guide program played a crucial role in enhancing the success of female students both academically and personally.

The components of the FAWE's gender-responsive school model that had the greatest impact on girls' education outcomes were gender-responsive management, gender-responsive pedagogy and empowerment clubs.

3 Greater engagement and support among parents or caregivers

In the Impact of Gender and Inclusive Pedagogies project, involving parents and caregivers helped foster greater support for teaching methods that encouraged mixed-gender interactions.

In Pakistan, school leaders fostered targeted collaborations with parents, local religious groups, teachers and students, allowing them to implement a pilot system that included flexible study hours for street children.

4 Improved teachers' attitudes and perceived efficacy

Teachers trained through FAWE's gender-responsive model were increasingly attuned to the specific needs of both girls and boys and were integrating this awareness into their teaching practices.

Following the GIP training in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Timor-Leste and Vietnam, teachers implemented a variety of inclusive pedagogical practices.

5 Greater support from principals and senior management in schools

In Nepal, school leaders who participated in the NICs acted to improve student absenteeism rates by providing extra support to girls during menstruation and organizing a free bus service for male and female students.

After participating in the FAWE gender-responsive management training, 94.2% of principals in Burundi, 91.7% in Mali and 68.4% in Senegal supported their teaching staff in incorporating gender-responsive pedagogy.

6 Tailored, relevant strategies to address SRGBV

In Honduras, the Strategies to Prevent SGBV project's findings influenced infrastructure improvements, such as making school washrooms, which were identified as high-risk spaces, safer. Nicaragua saw an increase in practical measures to prevent violence in schools, such as monitoring high-risk areas including the routes to schools, washrooms and playgrounds.

7 Scaling at national level and policy change

Scaling advisory committees played a pivotal role in guiding the potential scaling efforts of the Learner Guide program. Based on its experience, the government of Tanzania shared practical learning about how it adapted and integrated the program into more government schools with ministries of Education in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In Haiti, guidelines for preventing sexual violence and harmful physical punishment in schools were developed with government stakeholders through the Strategies to Prevent SGBV project.

These highlights are drawn from the GPE KIX report *Gender Equality in and through Education: A Research Synthesis*.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) is a joint endeavour between GPE and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) that aims to ensure partner countries have and use the evidence and innovation they need to accelerate access, learning outcomes and gender equality through equitable, inclusive and resilient education systems fit for the 21st century.

Five synthesis reports were commissioned by GPE KIX to consolidate evidence across research projects conducted between 2020 and 2024. Topics included: data systems and data use; early learning; gender equality, equity and inclusion; teacher professional development; and out-of-school children and youth.

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Photo Credit: GPE/ Federico Scoppa

Note:
*This infographic acknowledges gender diversity beyond traditional male/female binaries, however it seeks to remain consistent with how statistics are presented in source material.

Sources:
[1,2,4,5,7] UNESCO (2024). *Global education monitoring report 2024, Gender report: Technology on her terms.* https://doi.org/10.54676/WVCF2782
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[8] Global Education Monitoring Report Team. (2022). *#HerEducationOurFuture #BreakTheBias: Challenging gender bias and stereotypes in and through education; the latest facts on gender equality in education* [Fact sheet]. UNESCO. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380827
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