

Education For All - Home Learning Unit Resource 2

Women's and Girls' Education – Facts and Figures ([Unesco.org](https://www.unesco.org))

For far too many, being born a girl remains a primary cause for exclusion in the 21st century. Education is a basic human right, yet persistent inequalities in education cripples the lives of millions of women and girls, worldwide.

UNESCO works tirelessly to ensure universal access to a quality education for all women and girls. With a quality education, women and girls can break the vicious cycle, and shape the world according to their aspirations. They can make informed choices, improving the lives of their families and communities, and promoting the health and welfare of the next generation. Empowering women and girls mean empowering societies as a whole. It's one of the strongest foundations for lasting peace and sustainable development.

Evidence – out of school children

- Girls are more likely to never enter primary school than boys.
- Less than 40% of countries provide girls and boys with equal access to education. Only 39% of countries have equal proportions of boys and girls enrolled in secondary education.
- 54 million of the 76 million illiterate young women live in only 9 countries.
- Despite all international and national efforts, over half of children out of school are girls.
- In Morocco, only 45% of girls complete a primary school education and only 15% complete secondary school. (In the UK, almost all girls complete their primary school education and 85% complete secondary school.)

Evidence – completion rates and quality

- The completion rates and learning levels of girls are lower than those of boys. Participation of girls in school decreases as they progress through the education system.
- Globally, universal primary completion will not be achieved for the poor in some countries for at least another two generations, i.e. over 50 years.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, it will take the poorest girls 60 more years to complete primary school, than the richest boys. We can't wait until 2120.

Evidence – illiteracy in the world

- Of the world's 774 million illiterate adults, 2/3 are women (that is 500 million). The share of illiterate women has not changed for the past 20 years. Among the world's 123 million illiterate youth, 76 million are female. These differences between males and females remain persistent, with little change over time.
- The female literacy rate is under 50% in +12 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. In several cases it's under 20%. Imagine what this means in terms of deprivation, vulnerability to poor health & exploitation, in terms of mothers sending (or not) their daughters to school.

Evidence - Biases against girls run deep in education systems, whether in terms of participation, textbooks or teachers' attitudes.

Though women have actually overtaken men in number in higher education globally (there are of course great variations from country to country), the positive global trend hides other issues of gender inequality in higher education. ***They have the skills and qualifications, but the will to empower them is lacking:***

- Women are underrepresented in scientific and technological disciplines.
- Only 29% of the world's researchers are women.
- They face social and cultural barriers to obtaining leadership and management functions.

Evidence - Study after study demonstrates the positive impact of gender equality in education.

- Educated mothers mean healthy children. A child born to a mother who can read is 50% more likely to survive past age 5.
- Each extra year of a mother's schooling reduces the probability of infant mortality by 5% - 10%.
- An educated female population increases a country's productivity and fuels economic growth. Some countries lose more than \$1 billion a year by failing to educate girls to the same level as boys.

As Education For All Morocco says,

'If you educate a girl you educate the next generation'.