



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Basic Data

Despite progress, Ethiopia's education indicators are still poor and below Sub-Saharan averages¹. Ethiopia is ranked 126th out of 127 countries in the Education for All (EFA)² development index and it is unlikely to meet the EFA Goals by 2015.

Primary Education Enrollment			Secondary Education Enrollment			Out-of-school Adolescents		Adult Literacy (15 and over)	
M	F	GPI ³	M	F	GPI	M	F	M	F
85%	80%	0.94	39%	30%	0.77	1 465 000	1 823 000	42%	18%

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report statistical tables (school year ending in 2009).

Girls' education

As it is evident from the statistics, Ethiopian boys have more access to education than Ethiopian girls. As the greatest disparity can be found in secondary education and adult literacy, action must be taken in order to eliminate the gender gap in these areas. According to the data in the table above, for every 100 boys enrolled in secondary education, there are approximately 77 girls only. The number of female drop-outs is high in the country, especially in the transition from primary to secondary education. In 2009, only 41% of girls survived to the last grade of primary education and there were only 30% enrolled in secondary education. Over 1.8 million adolescent girls were out of school in 2009.

Women's literacy

The adult literacy rate in the country is also of concern. Statistics from 2009 indicate that 82% of Ethiopian women aged 15 and over are illiterate, compared to 58% of men.

Challenges and Issues

Poverty is one of the main barriers to girls' and women's education. Socio-cultural factors such as social norms and traditional practices about the role and position of women in Ethiopian society, gender-based violence, early marriage and teenage pregnancy, are affecting girls' and women's access to and completion of education.

¹UNESCO (2012). Ethiopia EFA Profile. Dakar. UNESCO.

²UNESCO (2011). Global Monitoring Report. Paris. UNESCO.

³The gender parity index (GPI) is the ratio of female to male values of a given indicator. A GPI of 1 indicates parity between sexes.

There are also various school-related factors affecting educational opportunities for girls. For example, the lack of motivated and gender-sensitive teachers, of girl-friendly school environments, the absence of targeted interventions to support girls and quality education, as well as long distances to schools, all affect negatively the chances of girl's access to and retention in secondary education.

Crowd-sourcing Girls' Education: a community-based approach to lowering drop-out rates in secondary school in Ethiopia

The project "*Crowd-sourcing Girls' Education: a community-based approach to lowering drop-out rates in secondary schools in Ethiopia and Tanzania*" was initiated in July 2011 with funding from the Packard Foundation. This project, which covers a three-year period (2011-2014) for a total amount of US\$ 1.5 million, divided equally between the two countries, aims at supporting girls in the critical period of transition from primary to secondary education, in view of mitigating drop-out and ensuring the retention of girls in schools.

The project in Ethiopia was officially launched on 7 March 2012 by the Government of Ethiopia with UNESCO and the Packard Foundation. The project aims at improving the learning outcomes of over 1000 young girls in ten secondary schools of Benishangul Gumz Regional State, where there is a wide disparity between girls and boys, especially when it comes to ethnic groups such as the Mao Komo⁴. Three schools in the Amhara region have also been included to allow for exchange of experience, best practice and lessons learnt across the two regions.

The project focuses on building girls' competencies in key life skills; putting in place peer support and learning groups; creating safe spaces in schools; involving boys in promoting girls' learning; and empowering girls through their involvement as actors in identifying and addressing the main obstacles to the successful completion of secondary education. This innovative approach includes capacity building of teachers, head teachers and non-teaching staff in gender-sensitive teaching and school practices. It also involves building bridges with parents and the community to strengthen the school-based actions and effectively retain girls in schools.

As of May 2012, activities have started in the ten schools situated in Benishangul, while those in the Amhara region are expected to be launched in early June.

"Better Life, Better Future"

UNESCO Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education

One Year On

May 2011—May 2012

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/>

⁴Education Statistics Annual Abstract 2009/10.