



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



# Better Life, **Better Future**

**UNESCO Global Partnership for  
Girls' and Women's Education**



*"There are no immovable barriers to gender equality and education for all. Young girls and women are changing the world, we must support them. We must give them the tools they need to shape the world for the better."*

**Irina Bokova**, Director-General of UNESCO

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## WHY A PARTNERSHIP ON GIRLS' AND WOMEN'S EDUCATION?

For many, being born a girl could be a life sentence of inequality and injustice. Girls and women are subject to multiple forms of discrimination in all spheres of their lives, including education. A vicious circle sets in: girls and women are less likely to go to school, their performance through education is often unequal compared to that of boys and men; and in turn these missed opportunities generate more discrimination, holding them back simply because of their gender.

We need to intensify efforts, increase awareness, galvanize new resources, and gain momentum for girls' and women's education. This requires an innovative partnership. We must bring together a wide range of partners and take advantage of their strengths, including in funding, expertise, and outreach.

To empower girls and women, we must pay particular attention to expanding and improving the quality of education at secondary level and in the area of literacy, which have been too often neglected in the implementation of the Education For All agenda. We must scale up successful initiatives, share good practices, and mobilize new actors.

2015 is a decisive year. The world is coming together to make crucial commitments for the development of a peaceful, equitable and sustainable future for all. Gender equality and respect for the basic human rights of girls and women, including their right to education, must remain at the heart of the post-2015 development agenda.

## THE PARTNERSHIP ADDRESSES THE TWO WEAKEST LINKS

### Secondary education

Girls face a distinctive set of barriers to learning, especially when they reach post-primary levels of education. At that age, girls drop out of school for many reasons: early marriage and pregnancy, violence in and around schools, poverty, household chores, lack of gender-sensitive learning contents and environments.

Targeted measures are needed to get girls to school, and keep them in school, until they complete a full course of education.

### Literacy

Illiteracy has a female face. It is a major obstacle to women's empowerment. Women are often the poorest and most marginalized in social, political and economic domains. Illiteracy is a reflection of gender discrimination and a factor in reproducing female poverty and keeping girls out of school.

Literacy programmes that are sensitive and adapted to their specific context and needs lead to transformational change.



*"Providing access to education to women and girls means fewer begging bowls and helpless hearts, more families transformed and a more harmonious society."*

**Peng Liyuan**, First lady of the People's Republic of China, and UNESCO Special Envoy for the Advancement of Girls' and Women's Education

### Education transforms lives

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© Niroj Shrestha, Nepal

*“Our partnership with UNESCO is enabling us to broaden the significant difference we are making in the lives of girls today – the women of tomorrow.”*

**Steve Bishop**, Procter & Gamble's Group President of Global Feminine Care

## ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

Since its inception, UNESCO has been a strong advocate, promoter and defender of the right to quality education for all, especially for girls and women. Gender equality and education are fundamental human rights, which stand at the core of UNESCO's mandate.

UNESCO launched the Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education in 2011, guided

by the conviction that by educating girls and women, we can break persistent cycles of poverty and in turn foster greater social justice.

The Partnership aims to increase learning opportunities for adolescent girls and women and to find solutions to some of the biggest challenges and obstacles to their education.

### OUR PARTNERS

A wide range of actors have supported programmes set up under the Partnership:

- **Governments** (China, France, Italy, Japan, Pakistan, USA)
- **International organizations** (UN Women, UNFPA, World Bank)
- **Private sector** (Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Foundation, Allied Aid Foundation, CEO Institute, CJ Group, GEMS Foundation, Hainan Airlines, HNA Group, Nokia, Packard Foundation, Procter & Gamble, UNFCU Foundation)
- **Civil society organizations and NGOs** (The Barefoot College)

# SNAPSHOT OF SOME OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS



2011-2014

## **Gender-Sensitive Training of Teachers and School Principals for Girls' and Women's Access, Participation and Advancement in Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in KENYA and LESOTHO**

(GEMS Foundation, USD 250,000)

**The issue:** Gender disparities persist across all education levels in Kenya and Lesotho. Girls and women are under-represented in specific education tracks, such as mathematics, science and technology, which leads to their weak presence in professions that require this set of knowledge and skills.

**Our strategy:** Setting up a supportive environment for teachers and school principals to build their capacities to attract and ensure effective participation of girls and young women in scientific fields of study. This includes through peer review, mentoring and counseling.

**The results:** In *Kenya*, 1,800 school children benefited from the project. The training of 30 secondary school principals, 60 secondary school teachers and 10 Ministry of Education officials created a critical mass of master trainers in gender-sensitive teaching and learning of sciences and mathematics. In *Lesotho*, 3,240 children in primary and secondary schools benefited from the project; 48 teachers and principals were trained; and three primary and three secondary schools have become model schools for gender-sensitive teaching and learning of mathematics and sciences.

2012-2014

## Literacy Project for Girls and Women in SENEGAL

(Procter & Gamble, USD 1 million)

**The issue:** Drop-out rates at the primary level are still high in Senegal, especially for girls. This has a direct impact on literacy rates, in a country where close to 40% of the population is illiterate, the majority of whom are women.

**Our strategy:** Offering ICT-based training support, including through tutoring, distance learning, and TV broadcasting of educational programmes, together with necessary teacher training and material development, to increase the literacy skills of girls and young women.

**The results:** 6,500 girls and women in 253 classrooms received training and improved their literacy levels; 3,000 girls and women took part in mobile and computer-based training programmes; 3,000 women developed their skills in sewing, hairdressing and farming; 135 classrooms and seven regional teacher training institutes were equipped with digital whiteboards; 1,900 girls with learning difficulties were supported to complete school; 60 lessons in Wolof were broadcast on national television; and 20 classrooms were equipped with solar energy with the support of local communities.

**Since 2014, the Project has been extended to NIGERIA** with further support from Procter & Gamble for USD 1 million, to support girls and women to acquire basic literacy and life skills by combining traditional face-to-face contact and distance education, through radio and television as well as mobile applications.

*“When UNESCO’s programme on literacy started in my neighbourhood I asked myself – but why don’t I enrol... to start learning again. This programme taught me many things, how to read and write, how to take people’s contact details and be able to use my mobile to communicate with them.”*

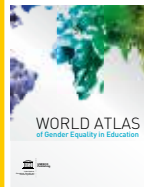
**Kewe Ndiaye**, a Senegalese young woman who left primary school to look after her siblings, explaining how the literacy programme enabled her to go back to school and how she now aspires to be a fashion designer

### PUBLISHED IN 2012



#### From Access to Equality

Cases studies and examples from around the world to illustrate the multiple benefits of investing in girls’ and women’s education, whether through formal or non-formal learning.



#### World Atlas of Gender Equality in Education

Over 120 maps, charts and tables to help visualize the educational pathways of girls and boys across the world, in terms of access, participation and progression from pre-primary to tertiary education.



© Salah Khated, South Sudan

2012-2014

## Crowd-Sourcing Girls' Education to Reduce Drop-Out Rates in ETHIOPIA and TANZANIA

(Packard Foundation, USD 1.5 million)

**The issue:** Adolescent girls continue to drop out of secondary education and fail to complete full quality basic education, because of non gender-responsive teaching methods and school management, and socio-cultural factors including lack of support from parents and communities that do not sufficiently value girls' education.

**Our strategy:** Empowering girls as change agents and working together with families, community leaders, community-level school inspectors and education officers, to create inclusive, learning-friendly and safe environments in and around secondary schools.

**The results:** Girls' retention and academic performance have improved across all beneficiary schools, with training provided to girls in such areas as entrepreneurship, life skills, basic ICT skills and comprehensive sexuality education. School clubs and income-generating activities were set up to assist disadvantaged girls; while girls have also benefited from the provision of facilities like water, sanitary pads, and soap in private sanitary corners. Education personnel were trained on creating inclusive, learning-friendly environments and gender-responsive pedagogy and management skills. Community members and influential leaders were sensitised on their crucial role for supporting girls' education.

*"The project has helped me build my confidence and self-esteem and trust in my capacity to realise any future dreams I might have through education."*

**Elizabeth Robert Mboje,** an adolescent girl in Tanzania who transitioned from lower to upper secondary school in a pilot school in a rural area



Launched in 2013!

### **Malala Fund for Girls' Right to Education**

(Established with initial contribution by Pakistan, USD 10 million)

Pakistan, Malala Yousafzai's home country, joined forces with UNESCO to protect and promote girls' education in Pakistan and abroad. This saw the creation of the Malala Fund in 2013, aimed at building capacities in both formal and non-formal education.

Since its inception, other partners have contributed to the Fund (with a combined amount of USD 380,000): Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Foundation, Allied Aid Foundation, CEO Institute, CJ Group and UNFCU Foundation.

This Fund supports projects that provide gender-sensitive training for teachers and raise awareness in communities, in order to improve access to safe and good quality learning environments for girls living in hard-to-reach areas.

Launched in 2014!

### **UNESCO/HNA Partnership**

(HNA Group, USD 5 million)

This partnership seeks to expand access to and the quality of education for adolescent girls that are hardest to reach, ensuring they stay in and complete education at all levels, and that learning environments are safe and free from school-related gender-based violence. Further projects will soon be launched in countries in Africa and Asia.

Launched in 2015!

### **UNESCO, UN Women, UNFPA, World Bank – Joint Programme**

*The Joint Programme for the Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women through Education* will combine the resources and expertise of each agency to promote quality education, gender equality and the good health of adolescent girls and young women, empowering them and enabling them to live a life of dignity. This programme will initially be launched in countries in Africa and Asia.





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## THE WAY FORWARD

Girls' and women's education is a fundamental human right and is a catalyst for wider development outcomes. Educating girls results in improved family health, civic participation, increased productivity and prosperity.

With the power to transform not only their lives but also the lives of their families and their communities, girls' and women's education must be prioritised. It holds the key to a better future and the key to the world we want to live in.

Building on the achievements and experiences of previous years, UNESCO will expand the Partnership to ensure that it

becomes a dynamic mechanism to promote girls' and women's education beyond 2015. It will complement other United Nations initiatives, including the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) and the United Nations Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative (GEFI).

The Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education will continue to raise awareness and advocate for the importance of girls' and women's education as a basic human right, a global priority and an imperative development objective, so that girls and women can access and benefit from good quality education.

### TARGETS FOR 2015 ONWARDS

- **Increase the number and diversity of partners**
- **Expand geographical coverage**
- **Increase the amount of resources invested in girls' and women's education**
- **Promote South-South and North-South-South cooperation**



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*“More than an act of positive discrimination for women and girls, whom as we know are the first victims of the scourge of illiteracy, this project is an innovative approach that consists of integrating information and communication technologies in the learning process.”*

**H.E. Mr Kalidou Diallo**, Former Minister of Education, Senegal (referring to the Literacy Project for Girls and Women in Senegal)

## HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Whether you represent:

- **Governments**
- **Bilateral & multilateral organizations**
- **Private sector**
- **Foundations**
- **Media**
- **Civil society organizations & NGOs**
- **Others**

You can invest in improving the lives and futures of girls and women in the most underprivileged settings. UNESCO's Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education provides a solid platform, bringing together UNESCO's unique experience in education and its extended multi-sectoral network.



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*“Offering girls basic education is one sure way of giving them much greater power - of enabling them to make genuine choices over the kinds of lives they wish to lead. Education in today's world is not a choice nor a luxury, it is a fundamental right of every child and the government is responsible for providing appropriate schooling to every child regardless of caste, creed and gender.”*

**H.E. Mr Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman**, Former Minister of State for Education, Pakistan, at the announcement of the Malala Fund for Girls' Right to Education

## **Find out how you can become a partner and support UNESCO's efforts to make the right to education a reality for all girls and women:**

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CLD 33715

“There is no justification – be it cultural, economic or social – for denying girls and women an education. It is a basic right and an absolute condition for reaching all the internationally agreed development goals. It is through education that girls and women can gain the freedom to make choices, to shape their future and to build more inclusive and just societies.”

Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO