

ISSUE FACT SHEET: THE IMPACT OF EDUCATING GIRLS

What changes when girls are educated? Everything!

Education is a human right and educating girls transforms families, communities, countries, and the world. When girls are educated, they get married later, have healthier children, and they value educating their own children. It is the fastest way to end generational poverty and help grow families and communities.

- Girls who receive an education are more likely to earn higher incomes, marry later, have healthier children, and lead productive lives. (1)
- One additional year of school can increase a woman's earnings by up to 20%. Women with secondary education could expect to make almost twice as much as those with no education, and women with tertiary education almost four times as much. (2)
- Educating girls goes beyond access to school. It includes building gender-equitable education systems whereby girls feel safe in classrooms and supported to make decisions about their lives and the careers they pursue. (3)

Worldwide, how many girls are out of school?

- 129 million girls worldwide are out of school. (4)

How many girls are born into extreme poverty?

- Worldwide, girls have a 1 in 4 chance of being born into extreme poverty.

Changing Communities

- Educating girls has one of the highest returns on investment available in the developing world. When girls are educated, they get married later, have healthier children, and they value educating their own children.
- A girl with even one extra year of education can earn 10-20% percent more as an adult.

Why aren't some girls in school?

Barriers to girls' education include poverty, child marriage, conflict, gender bias, child labor, natural disasters, gender-based violence and cost. (5)

Every year, 12 million girls under the age of 18 are forced to marry. Child marriage often compromises a girl's development by resulting in early pregnancy and social isolation, interrupting her schooling, limiting her opportunities for career and vocational advancement and placing her at risk of domestic violence. (6)

- Educating girls is not valued in many parts of the world. In developing countries, young girls are often expected to work taking care of younger siblings, fetching water, earning income, or caring for sick family members.
- Many times when families live in poverty, the parents will choose to send only their boys to school.
- In more than 50 countries, education is not free. Parents need to pay for school, books, and uniforms. Sometimes they need to pay for exams and report cards. Some families simply cannot afford the expense: often it is a choice between paying for school, or food.