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for every child

UNICEF Ethiopia



Background

As the second most populous country in Africa and one of the fastest growing economies on the continent, Ethiopia is on track to bring millions out of poverty. This path requires an equity approach to ensure the most vulnerable populations receive the support required to participate in the country's growth. Among these, adolescent girls face some of the hardest challenges, from child marriage, to high dropout rates in school, to gender-based violence, to limited opportunity to realize their rights. If Ethiopia is to reach its goal of becoming a middle income country by 2025, strong investments must be given to women and girls who constitute half of the population and potential working force – so that they are given the opportunity to contribute to the development and success of Ethiopia.

Gender Inequality in Ethiopia

There is a long history of gender inequality in Ethiopia, with poorer women and girls especially facing multiple disadvantages. The status of women and girls is curtailed when looking at empowerment, gender-based violence, and opportunities for employment. Within the home, preference for male children has been found in regards to education and employment opportunities. Girls are often faced with the burden of household chores, which for poor families includes many hours each day collecting water, as well as cooking meals and tending younger children – all hindering their ability to attend and perform successfully in school.

Education Situation for Girls

Ethiopia has made remarkable progress towards girls education, increasing net primary enrolment rates from 51 per cent in 2003/04 to 95 per cent in 2016/17. However, only 56 per cent complete primary school, 16 per cent of secondary school-aged girls are

attending secondary school, and an estimated 10 per cent go on to enrol in college. Girls face several challenges in attending safe schools with quality education, including:

- Too often families favour boys when investing in education. Poverty compounds factors that keep girls out of schools, such as early pregnancy, child labour, house work, and cost and distance to school.
- Girls face harmful social norms. Child marriage rates in the country are some of the highest in the world, impeding girls' chances of completing school.
- Some schools do not meet the needs of girls in terms of safety, available WASH facilities, and quality of education.
- Gender-based violence robs girls of education. Schools have the opportunity to be a safe haven and place to learn about rights against abuse and find help. However, too often cases of school-related, gender-based violence occur, including corporal punishment and sexual abuse from peers and authorities.
- Pastoralist, refugee, displaced and poverty-stricken girls face even greater challenges, where their complex circumstances make educational services even more difficult to provide.

Investing in Girls' Education

Girls are part of a vibrant new generation in Ethiopia poised to take on their future. Investing in their education allows them to achieve their dreams. It lets them build better lives for themselves and contribute to the health, safety and prosperity of their families and communities. Investing in girls education can bring change in a generation, giving girls opportunities to enjoy the benefits of this education.

Situation for Girls



13.6 million

School-aged girls in Ethiopia (primary and secondary)

40%

of girls are married as children



10.9 million

girls are enrolled in over 40,000 primary and secondary schools

1.6 million

Primary and secondary school aged girls are out of school

45%

of girls who start Grade 1 do not make it to Grade 5

83.8%

of secondary school age girls do not attend secondary school



407,623

refugee school-aged children in Ethiopia (52% boys & 48% girls)

1.39 million

internally displaced school-aged children in Ethiopia (48% boys and 52% girls)



Kalkidan Meskelu, a 14-year-old eighth-grader attends junior-secondary school in Addis Ababa. In 2017 she bravely spoke out for her friend who was being sexually abused by their teacher. Through her UNICEF-supported school gender club, she was introduced to the code-of-conduct that taught her and her friends their rights regarding gender-based sexual and physical violence and how to safely report these incidences at her school. As a result, the teacher was fired and sentenced to jail for the crime. ©UNICEF Ethiopia/2018/Zerihun Sewunet

UNICEF Response and Impact

UNICEF’s strategy supports adolescent girls’ empowerment by providing knowledge and skills which are relevant for girls and boys, strengthening school gender clubs to end school-related gender-based violence, improving primary school curriculum to ensure it is gender-sensitive, and actively engaging communities to support the education of girls. UNICEF strengthens C4D interventions to address harmful social norms, support girls’ progression in school, and contribute to ending child marriage. Support is given to ensure gender-appropriate WASH facilities in primary schools and gender equity is incorporated into all of UNICEF’s education programming.

The programme is implemented in close partnership with the Ministry of Education and other development partners. Through engagement within the Education Sector’s pooled fund, the General Education Quality Improvement Programme, UNICEF is using its range of experience, knowledge, and influence to leverage larger investments and bring a greater impact to improving the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of education for girls in Ethiopia.

Type of Beneficiary	2016-18 Result
Number of schools and students experiencing improved gender clubs	1,090 primary schools
Number of schools with new mechanisms in place to improve reporting on SRGBV	580 primary schools
Number of schools experiencing improved gender-sensitive sanitation facilities	170 primary schools
Number of <i>woredas</i> participating in C4D interventions that combat harmful social norms	42 <i>woredas</i>
Number of pastoralist girls attending UNICEF-supported ABE	124,549 pastoralist girls

Key Interventions

- 1. Support girls’ empowerment by strengthening primary school gender clubs**
Through life skills education, UNICEF is helping schools improve the effectiveness of gender clubs to deliver relevant knowledge and skills that support girls’ empowerment and combat harmful social norms.
- 2. End School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV)**
UNICEF works to strengthen the prevention and response mechanisms to end SRGBV while focusing on the implementation of the existing school code of conduct and establishing required referral linkages.
- 3. Gender-sensitive WASH in Schools**
Support is given to the WASH sector in providing gender-sensitive WASH facilities and services. UNICEF is also working to improve the Menstrual-Hygiene-Management programmes in primary schools.
- 5. Communications-for-Development (C4D)**
UNICEF is strengthening innovative C4D interventions within communities that promote social and behaviour change to support girls’ progression through the education system and contribute to ending child marriage.
- 6. Special focus for Pastoralist Girls**
Support is provided to pastoralist regions in extending Alternative Basic Education centres (ABEC, a flexible schooling system for pastoralists) to cater to a full primary and lower secondary programme, so that girls may access education in their immediate localities

Funding Gap (2018-2020)

Activity	Estimated Funding Gap (2018-20)
‘Upgrading’ ABECs to offer the full set of primary courses	US\$ 1,000,000
Strengthening SRGBV prevention and response, including child marriage prevention activities	US\$ 2,150,000
Life Skills Education	US\$ 350,000
Teachers’ Capacity Building on Gender Responsive Pedagogy	US\$ 250,000

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