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**Beyond Primary Education:
Challenges and Approaches to Expanding Learning Opportunities in Africa**

Parallel Session 5A

**Gender Issues in Post-Primary
Education**

**Transition to Post-Primary Education
with a Special Focus on Girls**

UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office

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Transition to
Post-Primary Education
with a Special Focus on Girls

Medium-term Strategies for Developing Post-Primary Education in Eastern and Southern Africa

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Eastern and Southern Africa**

**Prepared for UNICEF
Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
Education Section**



November 2007

**Transition to Post-Primary Education with a Special Focus on Girls: Medium-term Strategies
for Developing Post-Primary Education in Eastern and Southern Africa**

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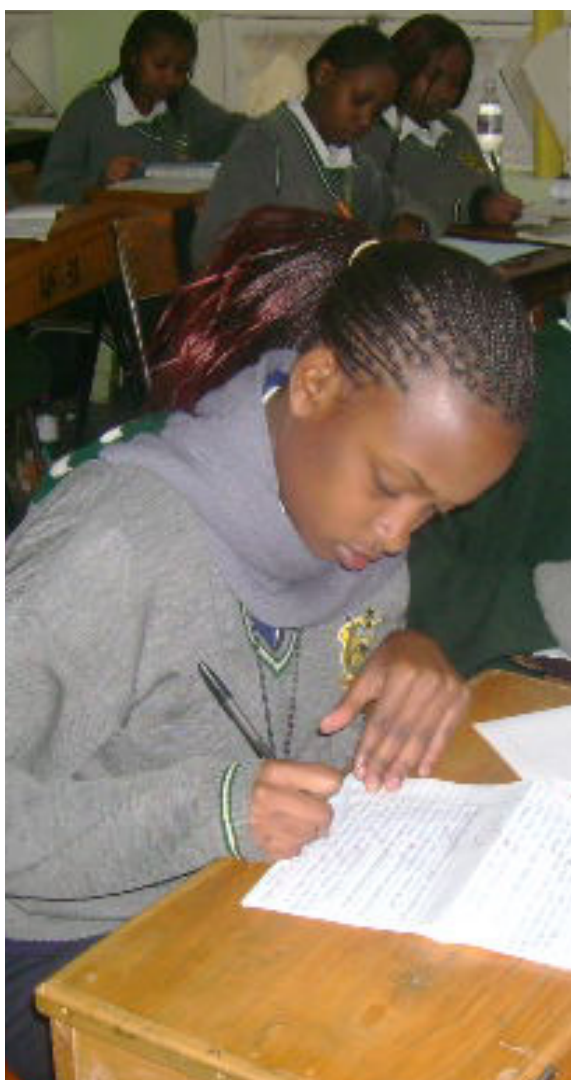
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Acronyms



AAK	ActionAid Kenya
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AED	Academy for Educational Development
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
BRAC	formerly Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee; now called BRAC
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
COs	Country offices
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DHS	Demographic and health surveys
EFA	Education for All
ESAR	Eastern and Southern Africa Region
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FEMSA	Female Education in Maths and Science project
FGC	Female genital cutting
FSSAP	Female Secondary School Assistance Project (Bangladesh)
FTI	Fast-Track Initiative (of the World Bank)
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GER	Gross enrolment rate
GPI	Gender parity index
HIV	Human immuno-deficiency virus
ICT	Information and communication technology
IRI	Interactive Radio Initiative (Zambia)
KRA2	Key Result Area 2 (of UNICEF's Medium-Term Strategic Plan)
LDC	Least developed country
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MTEF	Medium-term expenditure framework
NAR	Net attendance ratio
NE/AR	Net enrolment/attendance ratio
NER	Net enrolment rate
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NFPE	Nonformal Primary Education Programme (BRAC)
NOS	National Open School (India)
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OVC	Orphans and other vulnerable children
PACE	Post-primary basic education (BRAC)
PGNs	Practical gender needs
SGNs	Strategic gender needs
SMT	Science, mathematics and technology
STD	Sexually transmitted disease
SWAp	Sector-wide approach
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNICEF)
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal primary education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Thank You



Many people assisted with several aspects of this concept and research and contributed towards successful completion of the study *Transition to Post-Primary Education: This is a contribution to the UN girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) in Eastern and southern Africa.*

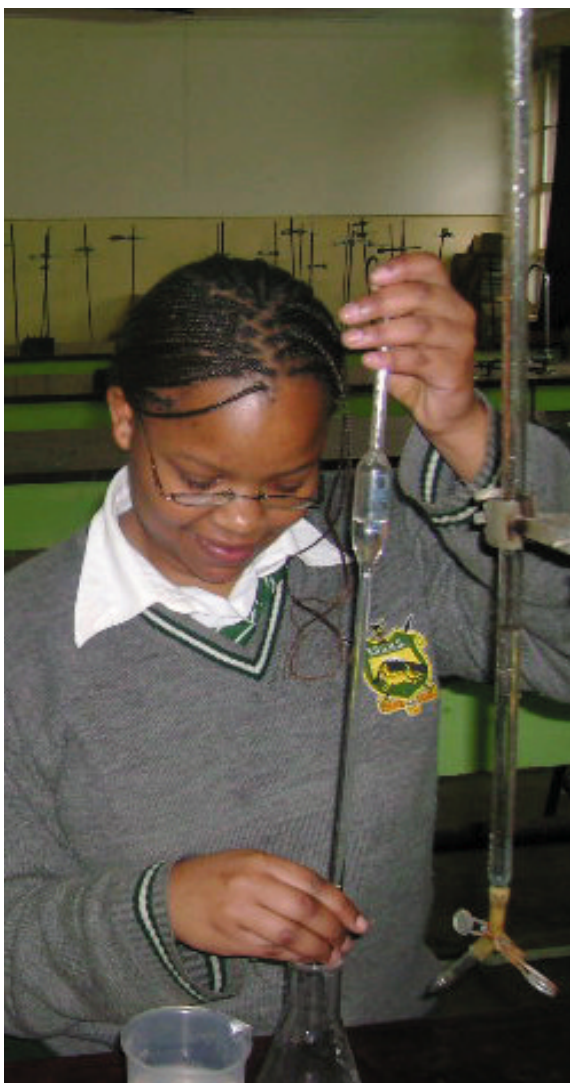
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Per Engebak
Regional Director
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Preface



Education is in the midst of many changes in sub-Saharan Africa and internationally. More children than ever are attending school and attainment rates are improving in many areas. The impact and spread of HIV/AIDS has introduced new challenges, and these challenges have led to the creation of new educational programmes in schools and beyond. Some countries are showing improved gender parity in schools. With the *Education for All* (EFA) targets in sight for a number of countries, many regions are facing new dilemmas of educating children after primary school or basic education. Despite the good news, much remains to be done. As the world moves into the future, the emergence of new social dynamics and different political and economic realities calls for more nuanced research in education, a redefinition of goals and intentions, and a fresh analysis of strategies and policy options.

This paper contributes to this endeavour by examining what we know about education for girls after primary school and girls who are above primary school age. We examine the intersections of gender and post-primary education, and present a range of strategies and policy options. Certain strategies and policies may or may not be appropriate for particular countries. They are offered here as considerations. Intimate knowledge of local and regional contexts is necessary to make informed decisions about appropriate next steps.

Many countries do not yet have an extensive research base on post-primary education to supplement the statistical data and analyses on enrolment and attendance rates, attrition, persistence, completion rates, and the like. However, a deeper understanding of social, cultural, political, and economic dynamics in local communities is necessary if we want to promote strategies that work. While this paper does not provide this research, we do discuss some of the existing studies. Many policy documents, including concept papers such as this, often present lists of barriers to girls' education without elaborating on when and under what circumstances these barriers exist. Without contextualized analyses, it is too easy to assume that all girls experience all the barriers mentioned. This is hardly the case.

The strategies in this paper, then, should be read as an invitation to further discussion and to investigations into what kinds of education are appropriate within particular contexts.

Creativity is paramount – there is no one-size-fits-all approach to reaching full enrolment, gender parity, and gender equality in schooling. Yet many educational plans focus on just such a model: primary, secondary, and tertiary schooling as the trajectory that everyone is expected to follow. Many girls and boys do not have access to schooling at various levels. And sometimes formal schooling does not meet all of the needs of particular students, communities, or countries. This paper suggests that a more

dynamic focus on multiple forms of education after primary school should replace the linear thinking about formal schooling as the only viable model that has dominated the dialogue to date. Support for further development of formal schooling is important, but introducing alternative types of programmes, various forms of nonformal education, and more flexible systems is also necessary if educational opportunities are to be available for all children.

Executive Summary



Why the focus on post-primary education? As countries in the Eastern and Southern Africa Region (ESAR) inch towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA), it is imperative to think beyond primary school. Many ESAR countries have made notable progress in increasing primary enrolment and improving gender parity, although much more remains to be done. As these countries work towards increasing enrolments and improving gender parity in primary education, new challenges arise, including issues related to post-primary educational opportunities, the quality of education, and an understanding of the complexities of gender relations.

The new challenges require re-thinking approaches to schooling beyond primary school to promote equity and prevent the wastage of human potential. At present, however, there is almost a policy vacuum around secondary education, a failure or at least reluctance to rethink the imperatives of educating the burgeoning numbers of primary school leavers.

The context

Because secondary schooling cannot now serve all youth or include all that adolescents should learn, heightened attention to this issue and more diverse programmes would enable more active participation and inclusion of curricular areas that are critical in ESAR countries.

For example, more flexible and dynamic approaches are needed to ensure an adequate pipeline for training primary school teachers. A system that allows post-primary students to move between nonformal and formal systems would support higher completion rates. Education in life skills, vocational and technical areas, sustainable community development, and traditional secondary schooling are all necessary. The broader range of post-primary educational options would best serve primary school graduates, as well as the large numbers (in some areas) of adolescents with incomplete primary education.

UNICEF, which has long championed the importance of basic education, has an emerging focus on post-primary education for girls, adolescents, and orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). The broadened concept of post-primary education also broadens possibilities in policy and planning so that education is



more inclusive, and it can have the potential to address a wider range of life concerns.

The concept paper summarized here takes stock of what we know at this time about these issues in relation to post-primary-aged girls. The significant gaps remaining in our knowledge are due in part to gaps in statistical data, but also stem from a paucity of field research that would enable a better understanding of “why” and “how” the progress that has been made has occurred.

The purpose of this report on issues related to post-primary education is twofold. First, it intends to support ESAR country offices in increasing transition rates to post-primary education and training, and in identifying a variety of educational options for post-primary-aged students, especially girls and other vulnerable children. Second, it hopes to contribute to improving the gender parity index (GPI) in primary and secondary education.

Various targets related to UNICEF goals, the MDGs, and EFA focus on the importance of girls and on gender parity in increasing access to education. Evidence-based advocacy requires full and thorough analyses of community and sociocultural dynamics along with statistical patterns in enrolment, attendance, transition, and completion rates of both boys and girls.

The lines between the various types of education – formal, nonformal, informal – are becoming blurred, and this blurring needs to be encouraged so that educational needs can be met in a variety of ways, using a variety of approaches, and involving a variety of participants.

What we know from existing data

Data for this study were collected from various sources (UNESCO’s *Global Education Digests*, UNESCO Institute for Statistics [UIS], and Demographic and Health Surveys [DHS]) to examine the enrolment, attendance, retention, and completion rates in primary and secondary education. These data indicate who is and who is not in school, how well children are transitioning into secondary school, and the ratio of girls to boys at various levels of schooling. This focus on formal schooling reflects the availability of data on formal schooling, and the relative lack of data on other forms of education.

In addition to the statistical data, the report drew from research and agency documents, websites, and publications from various sources that focused on post-primary girls and education. These included academic publications, conference papers and agency documents from academics, UNESCO, UNICEF, Oxfam, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Save the Children, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Academy for Educational Development (AED), and the Department for International Development (DfID).

Because of the limitations of available work on post-primary-aged girls, the search was expanded to include gender and education and primary education, as well as health related issues, life skills education, and vocational and technical education, in an attempt to locate how post-primary girls are included (or excluded) from a variety of educational initiatives. Examples of projects outside of ESAR broaden the discussion across world regions. Of course, local context is critical, but learning from each other in our increasingly global world can help us to think more creatively in our work to create good quality, equitable educational opportunities for girls and boys.

ESAR data on primary and secondary enrolment, student retention through primary education, and transition to secondary schooling reveal several important patterns. First, ESAR is a diverse region, with lower secondary gross enrolment rates (GER), ranging from 16 per cent (Burundi and Mozambique) to more than 95 per cent (Mauritius, Seychelles, and South Africa). Similarly, gender parity is near 1.0 (equal

numbers of boys and girls in school) in some countries, but very uneven in others. Moreover, in most countries with gender disparities, girls are under-represented in school, although in a few countries they are over-represented. The divergent patterns imply different contexts, conditions, interests, and goals, which in turn require different strategies.

Second, it is important to consider data not just at country levels, but also at local levels. Rural and urban conditions are often significantly different, just as some regions and populations within nations present unique situations. Third, most of the available data focus on formal schooling, but we know little about other types of educational options, such as life skills programme enrolment or vocational-technical patterns. Nevertheless, data on transition to and retention in secondary school can tell us not only how efficient a secondary school system is keeping and educating the secondary-school-age population. In addition, these data can also indirectly reveal that significant portions of some populations are not served at this level of the formal school system. When secondary school enrolment is 30 per cent, for example, 70 per cent of that age group is not in formal schooling. Where are they? What are their educational needs? As spaces in secondary schools are limited, how can nations best educate this important population of soon-to-be adults, while at the same time strengthening secondary education opportunities?

Research cited in the report is intended to give a general sense of the divergent patterns within the region. For example, only four countries have met gender parity goals in lower secondary, but only one also has high gross enrolment rates. One of these countries (Madagascar) has roughly equal numbers of boys and girls (GPI of 0.98) in lower secondary school, but only a 25 per cent GER. At upper secondary levels the disparities are more extreme, ranging from 3 per cent GER with gender parity (1.0) in Mozambique, to Lesotho with a low GER (23 per cent) and over-representation of girls (1.21 GPI). Several countries with low enrolment of girls tend also to have relatively low GERs. In many countries it is apparent that MDG targets for gender parity are being missed. It has been observed, in fact, that gender parity simply means that boys and girls are equally not in school. Limited access to secondary education indicates a need for a more multifaceted approach, one focused not only on secondary schooling.

Post-primary education need not be a linear path; instead, it should provide a variety of options to meet individual and family priorities and to work in support of community and national development processes.

Transition to post-primary education

Post-primary education generally embraces youth aged 12 and up, but the ages vary by country, programme, needs, and educational opportunities beyond primary education. The diverse elements of post-primary education encompass secondary school, tertiary education, teacher training, technical and vocational programmes, and life skills training for adolescents.

In addition, post-primary education includes formal and nonformal education systems and should take into account informal educational experiences. This multidimensional conceptualization, which includes age, educational opportunities beyond primary school, and a variety of educational approaches and options, is important because a linear focus on only the primary–secondary–tertiary education continuum excludes many youth from learning opportunities that are essential to life in an increasingly complex world.

Adolescence is a time of many life changes, and, as such, brings about many new roles and situations that youth who are well informed can navigate better. All adolescents need to learn about how gender shapes their lives so they can more easily make good



Cultural beliefs are real and must be well understood because educational interventions often challenge deeply held convictions.

choices. Issues related to sexuality, psychological and reproductive health, and women's and human rights are key. But also important is the development of abilities, skills, and knowledge for economic activity, community leadership, language, and literacy. Such emancipatory knowledge will help girls to be agents in their own change processes. Working with educators, policy makers, and community leaders in gender analysis processes can enable coordinated efforts towards positive, gender equitable change. Many of these concerns lend themselves to examining socially constructed gender relations as defined and acted out in particular contexts, and to enabling change that relies on altering gender relations that currently are not equitable. Educational initiatives like these benefit individuals, families, communities, and nations through increased involvement in civic participation and economic activities, and improved health and well-being.

A wide range of barriers and challenges thwart full educational participation by post-primary-aged youth in many countries – particularly girls, the poor, and orphaned and vulnerable children. Understanding these challenges, in specific contexts, is critical when devising strategies to increase educational

participation. Crucial among them are generalized poverty, inadequate funding resulting in too few schools and too few school places at secondary level, gender violence and insecurity in schools, as well as cultural and institutional hurdles. The HIV/AIDS epidemic is having a major adverse impact on education quality and accessibility, while lack of employment opportunities for youth leave many questioning the utility of staying in school at all.

Strategies

Numerous strategies have the potential to improve access to and success of post-primary education. Incentive strategies are designed to address barriers related to poverty and are often helpful in alleviating economic hardship on families. In situations where poverty is a significant barrier to education, abolishing school fees is highly effective but necessitates a commitment by governments to provide schooling without those costs. Additionally, stipends, scholarships, grants, subsidies, and in-kind provisions can create the economic opportunities needed for families to send their girls to school.

While several strategies exist for addressing poverty and the economic causes of not sending girls to school, others concern the lack of facilities, safe school buildings and spaces, and classroom materials. Alternative school structures have also been valuable in expanding the number of spaces that aid adolescent girls in their social and academic development.





A scan of regional and international examples reveals numerous curricular and programmatic structures that, depending on the sociocultural context, could prove to be advantageous to post-primary girls. For some, a curriculum that is focused on skills development and vocational and technical education might be the most appropriate. Other curricular and programmatic structural innovations include girl-friendly and youth-friendly schools, life skills-based education, and transformative education for social change. Some of these programmatic structures have both benefits and shortcomings that may or may not be magnified in certain contexts. In exploring each of these options for applicability in a specific national or communal context, the range of their sociocultural effects should be thoroughly contemplated.

Enlarging and improving the teaching force must be integral to any strategy as more and more children transit from primary school. Teacher training itself offers an alternative to traditional secondary schooling. Involving communities is similarly crucial. In many cases community members who have been made aware of the intrinsic value of education, especially for girls, are more likely to commit to providing time, attention, and resources to post-primary education – particularly for their girls. To note here is that if community participation is going to be active, intrinsically motivated, ongoing, and integral, the community and

parents must be able to exert some influence and to develop their leadership abilities.

Post-primary policy approaches

Specific policy approaches – sector-wide, flexible, seamless, country driven packages of interventions coordinated with poverty reduction efforts – must take the local context into consideration.

The coordinated, participatory nature of well-done sector-wide and multi-sector approaches is important as it includes more stakeholders, prevents duplication across

In some ways community involvement reflects a continuum, from schooling's influence on communities, to the influence of communities on education. Negotiating these relationships, and being cognizant of how power is inherent in the relationships among governments, donors, schools, NGOs, communities, parents, youth, and children is critical.

Educational links to democratic social process and civic engagement, and to the sustainability of the environment and of community development, are areas where we need more information.

agencies, and can build on the strengths of a larger group of individuals and organizational entities. Educational systems that are flexible can enable students to move back and forth across tracks and can adapt better to changing situations and student populations, thus enabling students to stay in schools or educational programmes longer.

Similarly, a seamless system encourages flexibility between formal and nonformal systems, and allows for mainstreaming alternative approaches. Among alternatives to existing structures are distance education, single-sex schools, cluster approaches, and “full service” institutions that include, for example, health clinics and day care centres for young siblings. This approach can also include educational settings beyond formal schools: apprenticeships, work training, nonformal education centres, and the like. Attention here should be focused on increasing the legitimacy and usefulness of all systems, so that they offer a variety of options in a less hierarchical manner.

The essence of effective policy is that it is country driven. Look around for good ideas, yes. Borrow liberally from the experience of others. But take care that any idea is thoroughly researched, discussed, and grounded in local reality. Ensuring that initiatives are driven by countries enables more integral national involvement and more likely sustainability. Conceptualizing initiatives as a package honours the very real relationships across various contextual factors, constraints, and barriers, and can address situations unique to particular local conditions.

Finally, policy approaches should be more integrated with poverty reduction efforts. Poverty continues to play a role in gender inequities. While alleviating poverty will not automatically alter gender inequities, the two are inextricably intertwined. Poverty alleviation is critical if we expect to educate all girls and boys, including those who are economically marginalized, through adulthood.



Where do we go from here?

The current policy vacuum around secondary education, coupled with intrinsic dualities embedded in the logic of formal education at secondary level, means that there are no simple answers. The dualities include regarding secondary education as both terminal and preparatory, a right and a privilege, compulsory and post-compulsory, uniform and diverse, meritocratic and compensatory. Shifting the focus from secondary school to post-primary education permits a more productive tension within these dualities and ambiguities, thus enabling them to be addressed more creatively.

Post-primary education encompasses a variety of purposes, populations, and interests. With a dynamic model that arises from such a conceptualization, we can create educational systems that are responsive to individuals and societies in diverse contexts, and that have potential for understanding – and countering – the underlying cultural and structural influences that perpetuate current gender and economic inequities.

Strategies should not address isolated barriers, but should involve a package of interventions that can address multiple constraints.

1

Introduction



The Education for All (EFA) goals and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) clearly state the commitment of governments and international organizations to enable all children to participate in and complete primary and secondary education, and to achieve equity and equality for girls and other disadvantaged children in particular. Despite this commitment, sub-Saharan Africa secondary enrolment rates are considerably lower than primary enrolment rates. There is also a huge gender gap in secondary schooling: In African countries only one in five girls enrol in secondary school (GCE 2005: 54). Boys continue to have higher transition rates to secondary school than girls in sub-Saharan African.

The Eastern and Southern Africa Region (ESAR) has made notable progress in increasing primary enrolment and improving gender parity, although the task is not yet completed (UNICEF 2005c). Net primary enrolment in some ESAR countries is as low as 48 per cent, while in others it is over 90 per cent. Similarly, in some ESAR countries, transition to secondary education is as low as 33 per cent, while in others the rate is higher. Net enrolment in secondary education ranges between 4 per cent and 93 per cent in this region, indicating great variation across countries. Furthermore, progress in gender parity is recognized at the primary level, but at the secondary level significant work remains to be done. However, gender equity for post-primary-aged girls involves more than secondary education.

UNICEF, which has long championed the importance of basic education, has an emerging focus on post-primary education for girls, adolescents, and orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs), for whom life skills based education is critical. At present, UNICEF is developing an Education Strategy Paper. For UNICEF as an organization, and in its role as an EFA flagship for girls' education, the debate on post-primary education is a major and critical part of the discussion.

In continuing to recognize and validate the arguments for universal education for girls, advocates, educators, and policy makers must also recognize the critical role of other forms of post-primary education in improving the lives of girls in ESAR. Post-primary education can include secondary schooling, but it also must address other educational needs of adolescents. These would include life cycle, gender-specific, and age-specific needs; life skills education; work-related preparation within

formal schooling and in other venues; and education in the context of community development.

Many development organizations are working on providing full primary school for all children, and moving towards increasing the enrolment rates and quality of education at secondary and tertiary levels. However, this linear trajectory is not tenable for all children at this time. With rapidly increasing primary enrolment rates, many countries are not keeping up with the demand for secondary education and this will only become more severe in the near future. In addition to insufficient spaces in secondary schools, selective admission criteria continue to eliminate many students from this option. While individual choice for post-primary options is one important element, contextual influences are critical. At this point, many communities do not have the infrastructure to incorporate large numbers of secondary school leavers into jobs. Rural-urban (or even international) migration is often the result. When secondary school is the main option available in a community, many children are left with no option. Children who cannot enter secondary school should have other options for continuing their education. Post-primary education need not be a linear path; instead, it should provide a variety of options to meet individual and family priorities and to work in support of community and national development processes.

The importance of post-primary education to poverty reduction, families, communities, and girls themselves is well documented. Post-primary education solidifies knowledge and skills and prepares girls for further studies and employment. Diversified opportunities can be provided through varied post-primary options including technical, vocational, life skills, and secondary education in both nonformal and formal educational settings.

Girls engaged in post-primary education serve as role models for other girls to pursue further education. Post-primary education of girls is also necessary to build a base of future

female teachers. Primary teachers are often trained at the upper secondary level, and these teachers need to complete lower secondary education before entering teacher training institutes. The need for female teachers at primary, secondary, and technical levels is great in many countries, and is further complicated in many sub-Saharan African countries that are struggling with girls' enrolment and gender parity. Girls who enrol and complete post-primary schooling have greater options for better life careers, since girls who receive a post-primary education have better opportunities as young women in the labour force. Women's participation in the labour force improves family economy, and it is necessary to local and national economic and social development (Boserup 1970; Rogers 1980). Post-primary education has a higher rate of return for girls. More years of schooling for girls also has an impact on countries' economic growth, young women's capacities and levels of empowerment, and family health.

Worldwide, ESAR, along with West/Central Africa, and South Asia, face the biggest challenges in providing girls with post-primary education. Secondary net attendance ratios (NAR) and gender parity indexes (GPI), for example, range from Mozambique's 43.1 NAR and 0.59 GPI, to South Africa's NAR of 91.2 and GPI of 1.0. On the other hand, Lesotho and Namibia's GPIs are above 1.0, at 1.13 and 1.06 respectively. Most countries in ESAR range from 0.74 to 0.90. However, NARs are more wide ranging, with six countries below 60, and only three above 80 (UNICEF 2005c: 9). As countries increase enrolments and attendance, and approach gender parity, new challenges arise. Namely, quality of education and understanding the complexities of gender relations become more critical. If gender relations are to be equalized, it is important to safeguard against advocating for girls to the extent that boys become disadvantaged and gender disparity simply reverses.

1.1 Purpose

Our purpose in this document is to support ESAR country offices (COs) in increasing transition rates to post-primary education and training, especially for girls and other vulnerable children, and to improve the gender parity index (GPI) in primary and secondary education. Key Result Area 2 (KRA2) of UNICEF's Medium-Term

UNICEF, which has long championed the importance of basic education, has an emerging focus on post-primary education for girls, adolescents and orphans and vulnerable children for whom life-skill based education is critical.

Strategic Plan, 2006–2009 states that “Gender and other disparities [should be] reduced in relation to increased access, participation and completion of quality basic education.” Target numbers 2 and 3 aim to “Increase transition rates to post-primary education and training destinations, especially for girls and disadvantaged children to be on track for 100% by 2015” and “Improve the GPI in primary and secondary education to be on course for achieving full parity by 2015” (UNICEF no date: 10). Goal Three of the MDGs is to promote gender equality and empower women; the target was to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and at all levels by 2015. Evidence-based advocacy requires full and thorough analyses of community and sociocultural dynamics along with statistical patterns in enrolment, attendance, transition, and completion rates of both boys and girls. This concept paper takes stock of what we know at this time about these issues in relation to post-primary-aged girls. Significant gaps in our knowledge persist, however, in part due to gaps in statistical data, but also due to the paucity of field research that enables one to understand more about “why” and “how” the progress that has been made has occurred.

While our current knowledge should help the ESAR COs with their work, it is also anticipated that UNICEF’s ESAR office can share this concept paper and their regional experiences with other regions, and can expand this initiative to include a global perspective. Finally, this effort contributes to the work of the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) and the progress that has been made in ESAR countries.

An additional purpose of this initiative is to assist in empowering nongovernment organizations (NGOs) such as the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) in working towards gender equity in ESAR and other regions.

1.2 Audience

Our audience for this report is primarily the country offices in the East and Southern Africa Region (ESAR), and, secondarily, other regional and country offices, particularly UNGEI focal points, and units working specifically on EFA and MDGs. Presentation of the first draft occurred in Maputo in August 2006. The final draft was circulated among ESAR COs, with wider distribution following their comments and authors’ final revisions.

1.3 Organization

This document provides, in Section 2, some contextual information about what we know at this point about primary enrolment trends, the flow from primary to secondary, and secondary enrolment trends



across ESAR countries. Section 3 is an overview of the most prominent issues discussed in the existing literature on transitioning to post-primary education, including why post-primary is important, conceptualizations of post-primary education, benefits, and barriers. Strategies are outlined in Section 4, within broad categories of incentives, facilities and materials, school structures, curricular and programmatic structures, teachers, safety, community, the

third way, and cultural concerns. Broader approaches are presented and discussed in the fifth section, in which we suggest an approach with a sector-wide, flexible, seamless, country-driven package of interventions. References noted at the end include both those referred to in this document and other resources that are also pertinent.

1.4 Methodology

Data on which this document draws were located and selected using two strategies, one for quantitative data, and the other for documents and academic sources. Statistical data are drawn from the print and electronic versions of the 2005 and 2006 *Global Education Digests* (UNESCO 2005, 2006), data compiled by UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), from national demographic and health surveys (DHS), and through other documents primarily from UN organizations.

In addition to statistical data, we looked for research and agency documents from various sources that address issues related to post-primary girls and education. Agency document searches included country project and programme documents (e.g., gender reviews, impact analyses, and evaluations); international organizations' policy and conference papers; and international organizations' data on indicators for adolescent girls and education. We did a thorough search for documents on the websites of UNESCO, UNICEF, Oxfam, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), as well as a review of key documents from Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Save the Children, US Agency for International Development (USAID), Academy for Educational Development (AED), and UK Department for International Development (DfID). Additionally, a variety of academic journal articles, conference presentations and papers, books, and scholarly research studies were identified through their mention in other agency documents and through a library search

of books and articles. UNICEF-New York also provided a variety of documents.

We expected, and found, limited resources that explicitly focus on post-primary-aged¹ girls, so our search expanded to gender and education, and primary education, as well as health related issues, life skills education, and vocational and technical education. In addition, we did not limit our search to documents related to the ESAR. The world is now a global village and educational policy ideas are generally shared across regions. We therefore included documents and publications on post-primary education of girls in this region, and we also draw on examples from outside of Eastern and Southern Africa.

1.5 Limitations

Although there is a growing body of literature about gender and post-primary education, it is still in its infancy. As such, there is a shortage of detailed descriptions and rigorous research on existing programmes and projects, and on the contextual conditions that influence gender dynamics at post-primary levels.

The statistical data that are included in this study should be read for their general patterns. Limitations in data collection in low-income countries are well known. The comparability of some of the data is problematic, as it was not collected in the same year (e.g., in some cases we may be comparing 2002 data with 2003 data).

We also limited our search to documents in English, so this paper does not rely on documents in other languages.

Chapter Notes

¹ The ages of "post-primary-aged" students are not consistent across countries because some primary school systems end after six years and others after eight years. In some areas, this category might include those above age 10 or 11, while in others, age 14 or so may still be primary school age.

2

What We Know from Existing Data



One major limitation with existing data is that most of them pertain to formal schooling, and not to alternative forms of education or to educational components within work in other sectors. Therefore, in this section we present some limited information on gender patterns in primary and secondary education. It is evident that there are many children not served by formal schooling; alternative opportunities are therefore urgently needed.

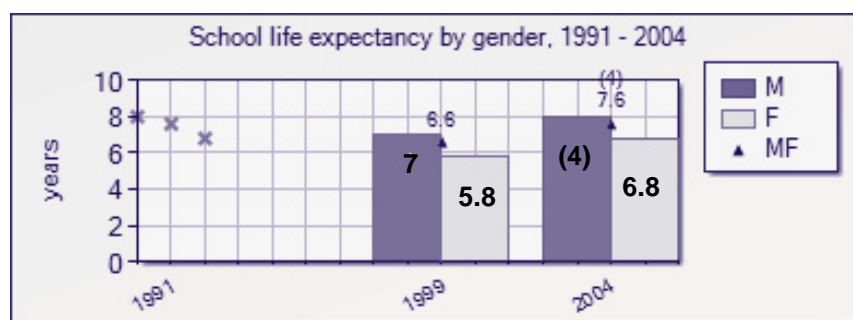
Data on primary enrolment, student flow (transition) from primary to secondary, and secondary enrolment trends are presented here. The data that are relied on for this overview are primarily from the 2005 and 2006 *Global Education Digests* (UNESCO 2005, 2006), and from UIS on-line data (UIS 2006), unless otherwise noted.¹ In some areas we see positive trends, with growing enrolments and good progress towards gender parity. Figure 1, for example, indicates that children are staying in school longer in sub-Saharan Africa – nearly seven years for girls, and about eight years for boys. However, there are some areas of serious concern.

2.1 Primary enrolment trends

Data on primary enrolment reflect the efforts and progress made towards achieving universal primary education (UPE). According to UNICEF (2005) 25 per cent of the countries in the region – Malawi, Madagascar, the Seychelles, South Africa, and Tanzania – show primary net enrolment/attendance rates² (NE/ARs) at 90 per cent or above. Another 20 per cent – Botswana, Lesotho, Zambia, and Zimbabwe – have over 80 per cent of the relevant age group enrolled in primary education. Primary NE/ARs above 70 per cent are reported for Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, and Rwanda. Only Burundi, Eritrea, and Ethiopia have net enrolment/attendance rates below 60 per cent, with Eritrea having the lowest numbers of children enrolled in primary schools at 48 per cent. (See Table 1.)

Even more encouraging are the improvements in gender parity according to existing data for the region. The gender parity index³ (GPI) for eight ESAR countries shows gender parity in primary net enrolments. Slight gender disparities are noted in favour of girls in Lesotho (1.06), Malawi (1.05), Namibia (1.08),

Figure 1. School life expectancy by gender, 1991–2004, sub-Saharan Africa



NOTE: (4) = footnote indicating that this is based on UIS estimations.

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). 2006. Progression and Completion in Primary School. Statistics in Brief, Sub-Saharan Africa, Primary Education. Retrieved October 28, 2006. From http://www.uis.unesco.org/profiles/EN/EDU/countryProfile_en.aspx?code=40350 Available at <http://www.uis.unesco.org/profiles/EN/EDU/pacrChartPic40350.png>

and Rwanda (1.04). Burundi and Eritrea have the lowest GPIs for this indicator, at 0.89 and 0.85 respectively.⁴ Table 1 lists GPIs based on a variety of measures other than NER, and reveals similar patterns. UNICEF (2005a) reports that, while the GPI is 98 per cent for the region as a whole, “[g]ender parity in this region translates into boys and girls equally out of school” (p. 16). When compared to the enrolment data, ESAR still has 21 million children out of school (UNICEF 2005a).

Even with high GPIs overall, attention should be focused on the countries with the highest and the lowest GPIs. Where GPIs favour girls – three to seven countries, depending on which measures are considered (e.g., column 4 or column 8 in Table 1) – we need more research as to why this is occurring so that all gender bias can be fully understood.⁵ In seven ESAR countries, however, the GPI continues to indicate bias towards girls (Table 1).

Incidentally, very high primary gross enrolment rates⁶ (GERs) in Lesotho (131), Madagascar (134), Malawi (125), Rwanda (119), and Uganda (118) may suggest that great strides are being taken by these countries to get children into primary schools.⁷ Similarly, with relatively high enrolments and GPI at the primary level across the region, with a few exceptions, primary school completion and transition to post-primary become important.

Although ESAR countries are doing fairly well with increasing enrolment rates and GPIs (with the few exceptions noted), regional disparities within countries can be stark and mask critical situations. In Kenya, for example, the NER in the North Eastern Province is 12.4 per cent overall – 9.1 per cent for girls, and 15.7 per cent for boys. The GER for this region in Kenya has recently dropped to 26 per cent – 32.7 per cent for boys and 18.1 per cent for

girls (Ibrahim 2006). Identifying areas within countries with divergent patterns is critical to comprehending how gender might still disadvantage some girls in terms of educational access and school retention in these locales.

2.2 Student flow trends

Starting and completing primary school, and then making the transition to post-primary education are marked with constraints and hurdles all along the way. Here we look at the flow of pupils and students through their school years.

2.2.1 Survival rate to last grade of primary

More than 80 per cent of primary students make it to the last grade in primary school in only five ESAR countries – Botswana, Eritrea, Namibia, the Seychelles (99 per cent), and Zambia; South Africa is slightly below, at 79 per cent (UNESCO 2006). In most countries in the region, the numbers range between 55 and 73 per cent. Malawi, Mozambique and Rwanda show the lowest numbers, at just above 30 per cent. While some countries are doing fairly well with primary completion, others reveal severe challenges, with the majority of children not completing primary school in some areas.

Eritrea has the largest gender gap for this student population, with 86 per cent of boys and 73 per cent of girls advancing to the last grade of primary school (based on 2003 to 2004; UNESCO 2006). Lesotho has the reverse of this situation, with only half of the boys and 65 per cent of the girls making it to the last grade (GPI of 1.32). Data for Ethiopia, Madagascar, the Seychelles, and Zimbabwe show gender

Table 1. Gender parity and primary education

Countries and territories	Primary NE/AR (c. 2001) ^a				Primary NAR (2005) ^c				AARI observed (1980-2001)			AARI required for 2015 goal		
	Total	Boys	Girls	GPI ^b	Total	Boys	Girls	GPI ^d	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
EASTERN/SOUTHERN AFRICA														
Burundi	53.5	58.9	48.1	0.82	56.8	61.2	52.4	0.86	0.83	0.59	1.08	3.32	2.94	3.71
Comoros	55.1	59.9	50.2	0.84	64.3	68.5	60.5	0.88	1.54	1.43	1.73	2.81	2.51	3.11
Ethiopia	30.6	33.1	28.0	0.85	34.6	37.0	32.1	0.87	1.02	0.98	1.03	4.96	4.78	5.14
Eritrea	42.9	46.1	39.6	0.86	48.5	50.6	46.0	0.91	1.41	1.13	1.61	4.08	3.85	4.32
Angola	61.5	66.0	56.9	0.86	67.8	68.8	67.2	0.98	0.90	0.39	1.46	2.27	2.00	2.53
Somalia	10.8	11.6	10.1	0.87	12.1	12.6	12.1	0.96	0.32	0.24	0.50	6.37	6.31	6.42
Mozambique	59.7	63.5	56.0	0.88	63.7	66.5	60.7	0.91	0.99	0.75	1.19	2.88	2.61	3.14
Zambia	66.6	66.9	66.3	0.99	68.2	67.1	69.1	1.03	0.39	0.04	0.70	2.39	2.36	2.41
Tanzania, United Republic of	54.4	54.3	54.5	1.00	58.1	55.7	60.1	1.08	0.91	0.34	1.41	3.26	3.26	3.25
Malawi	81.5	81.5	81.5	1.00	85.0	83.3	86.5	1.04	0.89	0.44	1.25	1.32	1.32	1.32
Seychelles	94.8	94.9	94.7	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.37	0.36	0.38
Madagascar	69.0	68.6	69.4	1.01	74.7	74.2	75.1	1.01	1.41	1.40	1.43	2.21	2.24	2.18
Swaziland	77.0	76.6	77.4	1.01	80.0	79.0	80.9	1.02	0.74	0.59	0.87	1.64	1.67	1.61
Uganda	78.9	78.4	79.4	1.01	82.6	80.0	84.8	1.06	0.92	0.41	1.35	1.51	1.54	1.47
Zimbabwe	80.5	80.0	81.0	1.01	82.4	81.1	83.5	1.03	0.62	0.34	0.84	1.50	1.54	1.46
Kenya	70.2	69.7	70.8	1.02	73.2	71.0	75.1	1.06	0.73	0.33	1.08	2.13	2.16	2.09
South Africa	93.9	92.9	94.9	1.02	96.0	94.6	97.4	1.03	0.53	0.43	0.62	0.44	0.51	0.36
Mauritius	99.2	98.5	100.0	1.02	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.05	0.11	0.00
Rwanda	84.3	83.1	85.4	1.03	89.3	86.4	91.7	1.06	1.25	0.81	1.58	1.12	1.20	1.04
Botswana	81.1	79.3	82.9	1.05	86.0	84.7	87.4	1.03	1.23	1.35	1.13	1.35	1.48	1.22
Namibia	78.4	75.9	80.9	1.07	81.3	78.6	83.9	1.07	0.71	0.66	0.76	1.54	1.72	1.36
Lesotho	84.7	81.4	88.0	1.08	86.0	83.3	89.0	1.07	0.35	0.48	0.26	1.10	1.33	0.86

NE/AR = Net enrolment/attendance ratio; AARI = Average annual rate of increase; GPI = Gender parity index

Note: Shaded countries and territories are on course to meet the goal of gender parity in primary education (GPI from 0.96 to 1.04 in 2001).

... Data not available.

(a) Years of NE/AR estimate range from 1998 to 2002.

(b) Ratio of girls' to boys' primary NE/AR.

(c) Net attendance ratio (NAR).

(d) Ratio of girls' to boys' NAR.

Source: UNICEF, 2005. *Progress for Children: A Report Card on Gender Parity and Primary Education*, No. 2, April. Eastern and Southern Africa, Table (page 28). <http://www.unicef.org/progressforchildren/2005n2/tables.php?pg=1>

parity. GPIs for this indicator in Botswana, Namibia, Rwanda, and South Africa indicate a slight advantage of girls over boys.⁸

Several of the ESAR countries are doing quite well with girls' enrolment, and some are even experiencing more girls in school than boys. However, to understand this pattern more fully, we suggest that we need to know *why* more girls than boys are completing primary school. With a focus on gender, and not solely on girls, we can then address the needs of either boys or girls, depending on the particular

situation. If we know *why* gender parity is not met (i.e., GPIs under 0.96 or over 1.05), we can then focus strategies on the specific barriers. For example, in Lesotho, if the gender disparities favouring girls relate to boys dropping out of school and migrating to South Africa to work in the mines, we might consider economic opportunities in both Lesotho and South Africa as key influences on both girls and boys remaining in, or dropping out of, school. Similarly, local perceptions about the benefits of staying in school may affect girls and boys

differently. Until full enrolment and completion of secondary education are reached by all boys and girls, rural and urban children, OVCs, and children of all ethnic and religious groups and regions, we need to continue to monitor trends with disaggregated data.

2.2.2 Transition rates from primary to secondary

Of the students who complete primary school, we again see some countries with higher transition rates into secondary than others.⁹ Twenty-five per cent of the region's countries have very high transition rates from primary to secondary education – Botswana (99 per cent), Kenya (95 per cent), Namibia (88 per cent), the Seychelles (95 per cent), and South Africa (95 per cent); that is, most of the students who complete primary school continue into secondary. In all of these countries, girls and boys are moving on to secondary education at similar rates. The case of Eritrea is interesting, where both the transition rate (81 per cent) and the GPI for this indicator (1.00) are reasonably high in comparison with other data, particularly the GPIs for various other indicators analysed for this country. This seems to suggest that most boys *and* girls in Eritrea who make it through primary school move on to secondary education. With primary enrolment rates low in Eritrea (see Table 1, 42.9 NE/AR), however, most students are still not completing primary, but those who complete primary are moving on. In contrast, Burundi (34 per cent), Uganda (36 per cent), and Tanzania (33 per cent) have the lowest transition rates in the region, suggesting barriers to continuing beyond primary education. Overall, disparities within the region are quite noticeable, from 33 per cent to 99 per cent transition rates (UNESCO 2006).

2.3 Secondary enrolment trends

Students who complete primary school still have a long way to go to further their education. Although the statistics are mixed, girls remain at a disadvantage.

2.3.1 Gross enrolment in lower secondary

Twenty per cent of ESAR countries have reasonably high GERs for lower secondary (between 85 and 109 per cent) – Botswana, Kenya, Mauritius, Seychelles, and South Africa,

with Namibia at 74. However, 25 per cent of countries report enrolment rates below 25 per cent – Burundi, Madagascar, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Uganda. The remaining eight countries for which we have data have GERs around 40, with Eritrea being a notable exception at 61.¹⁰ (See Table 2.)

GPIs for lower secondary indicate gender disparities in favour of girls in Botswana, Namibia, Seychelles, and South Africa, as well as in Lesotho (1.29). Kenya, Madagascar, and Zimbabwe are at or very close to parity. Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zambia have GPIs above 0.80, with Rwanda leading the group at 0.89. Eritrea and Ethiopia have the lowest GPIs, at 0.61 and 0.68 respectively (Table 2).

2.3.2 Gross enrolment in upper secondary

GERs for upper secondary drop substantially, with only Seychelles staying above 90 per cent (87 per cent for boys and 98 for girls), as well as South Africa approaching 90, Mauritius at 80, and Botswana nearing 60 per cent. (See Table 2.) The majority of the ESAR countries have upper secondary GERs between 20 and 30 per cent. Burundi, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Uganda fall into a group with the GERs at or below 10 per cent, with Mozambique being as low as 3.

Similarly, GPIs for upper secondary are significantly lower, compared to those for lower secondary. Botswana, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, and Lesotho remain the only countries with GPIs at or above 1, with gender disparities in Lesotho heavily favouring girls at 1.21. In the same vein, the Seychelles and South Africa appear to have more girls than boys enrolling in upper secondary education, with GPIs of 1.12 and 1.08, respectively. Eritrea and Ethiopia yet again have the lowest GPIs, with twice as many boys as girls enrolled in upper secondary programmes.¹¹

2.3.3 Net enrolment and attendance rates for all secondary programmes

Net enrolment information at the secondary level is very sparse and is not available for all of the ESAR countries. The numbers that are available paint a fairly bleak picture. Only the Seychelles has a high enrolment, with an NER of 93 per cent; Botswana is a distant second, with 61 per cent. Kenya, Namibia, and Zimbabwe have secondary NERs at or nearing 40 per cent. In most of the remaining countries, only 20 to 30 per cent of the relevant age group

Table 2. Secondary gross enrolment rates and gender parity indices

Country	Lower secondary, all programmes		Upper secondary, all programmes	
	GER	GPI	GER	GPI
Botswana	87	1.07	58	1.02
Burundi	16	0.78	7	0.67
Eritrea	61	0.61	19	0.49
Ethiopia	44	0.68	16	0.58
Kenya	87	0.97	29	0.89
Lesotho	45	1.29	23	1.21
Madagascar	25	0.98	n/a	n/a
Malawi	41	0.83	16	0.73
Mauritius	99	1.02	80	0.96
Mozambique	16	0.67	3	1.00
Namibia	74	1.17	30	1.00
Rwanda	18	0.89	10	0.89
Seychelles	109	1.06	92	1.12
South Africa	95	1.06	88	1.08
Swaziland	50	1.04	29	0.92
Uganda	19	0.82	9	0.66
Zambia	40	0.84	16	0.71
Zimbabwe	55	0.95	27	0.86

Source: Based on data from UNESCO, 2006. *Global Education Digest: Comparing Education Statistics Across the World, 2006*. Montreal, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Table 5.

is enrolled in secondary education programmes. Uganda and Mozambique have the dubious distinction of having the lowest secondary NER in the region, at 13 and 4 per cent, respectively.

Interestingly, in the countries with relatively high secondary NERs – Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, and the Seychelles – the gender balance is skewed towards girls. This is particularly true in Namibia (GPI of 1.35) and Lesotho (GPI of 1.54); the exception is Kenya, which shows gender parity on this indicator. Among the remaining countries, Malawi, Uganda and Zimbabwe have GPIs between 0.86 and 0.93, with Eritrea and Ethiopia trailing the group at 0.66 and 0.64 respectively.

Net attendance rates (NARs) are noted in Table 3 where data are available (UNICEF 2005c). Again, a wide variety of measures exists. GPIs range from less than 0.60 in Mozambique, to 1.13 in Lesotho. Similarly, NARs range from 30.4 in Rwanda to 91.2 in South Africa. As noted above, GPIs must be examined in relation to enrolment and/or attendance rates: where gender parity is near 1.0, but enrolments or attendance are low, we should examine how poverty and gender interact to give us these patterns. That is, if the poorest families are not in school, gender parity would be assumed to be in relation only to those families that are relatively better off economically. We do not know whether gender

parity would remain if more children were in school, particularly at the secondary level.

2.3.4 Highlights and future projections

Secondary enrolment data show that with the exception of a few countries, secondary education is still out of reach for many students in Eastern and Southern Africa. About half of the countries in the region report GERs for

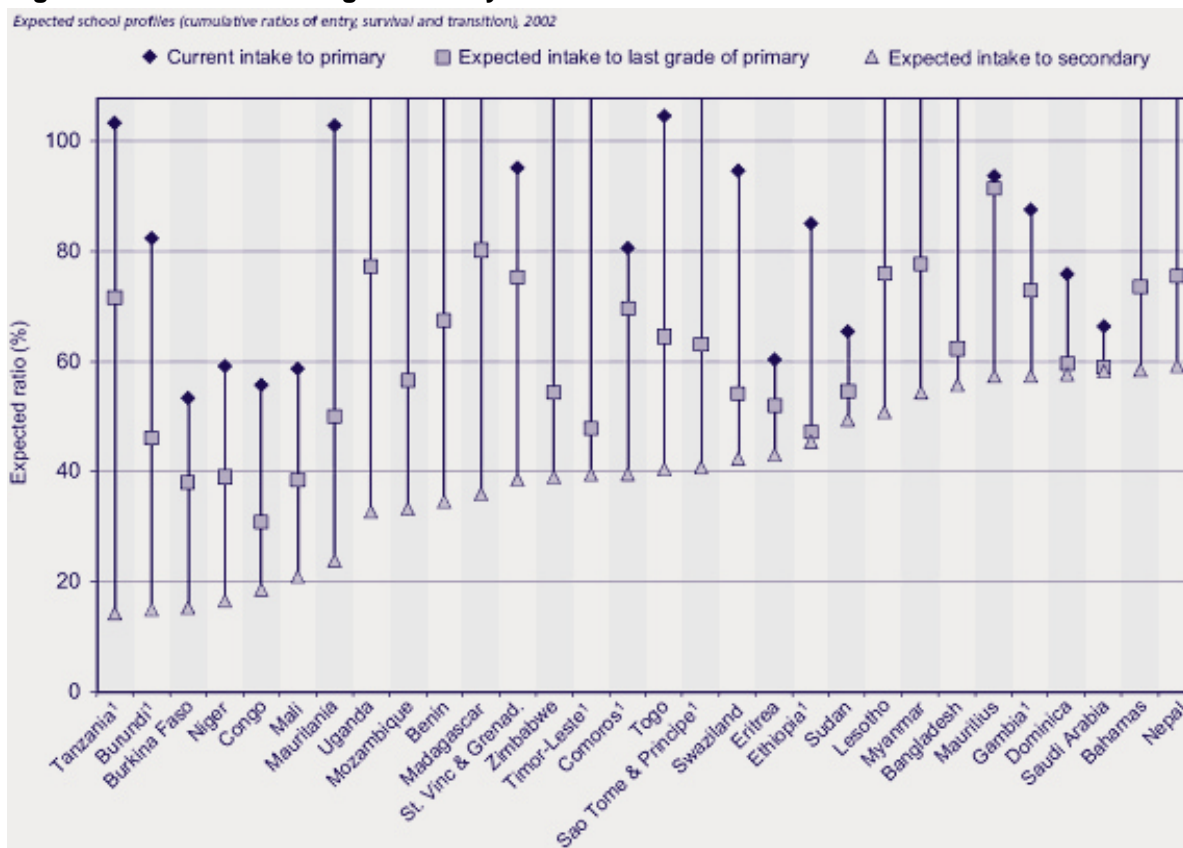
Table 3. Secondary education net attendance ratios and gender parity indices

Country	NAR	GPI	Country	NAR	GPI
Mozambique	43.1	0.59	Malawi	73.4	0.90
Zambia	58.6	0.74	Rwanda	39.4	0.92
Burundi	35.5	0.79	Kenya	80.3	0.93
Eritrea	73.0	0.86	Madagascar	48.9	0.94
Uganda	76.0	0.87	Swaziland	70.8	0.96
Zimbabwe	70.7	0.89	South Africa	91.2	1.00
Angola	75.9	0.89	Namibia	84.0	1.06
Tanzania	40.1	0.90	Lesotho	73.0	1.13

Shaded countries are on course to meet the goal of gender parity in secondary education (GPI from 0.96 to 1.04). NAR: net attendance ratio at the secondary level, based on household surveys (demographic and health surveys and multiple indicator cluster surveys), 1998–2003. The NARs noted here are for both males and females combined. GPI: gender parity index; ratio of girls' to boys' secondary net attendance ratio.

Source: Based on data from UNICEF, 2005. *Progress for Children. A Report Card on Gender Parity and Primary Education*, No. 2, April. New York: UNICEF, p. 9.

Figure 2. Children reaching secondary school



Data refer to 2001. Expected intake to lower secondary is calculated as apparent intake to primary (as proxy for the probability that a child starts primary education) multiplied by the survival rate to last grade of primary (proxy for the probability to complete primary education once started) multiplied by transition rate to lower secondary (proxy for the probability to continue to lower secondary once completed primary). Only countries with less than 60 per cent expected intake to lower secondary are presented. Countries are ranked in ascending order of expected intake to lower secondary.

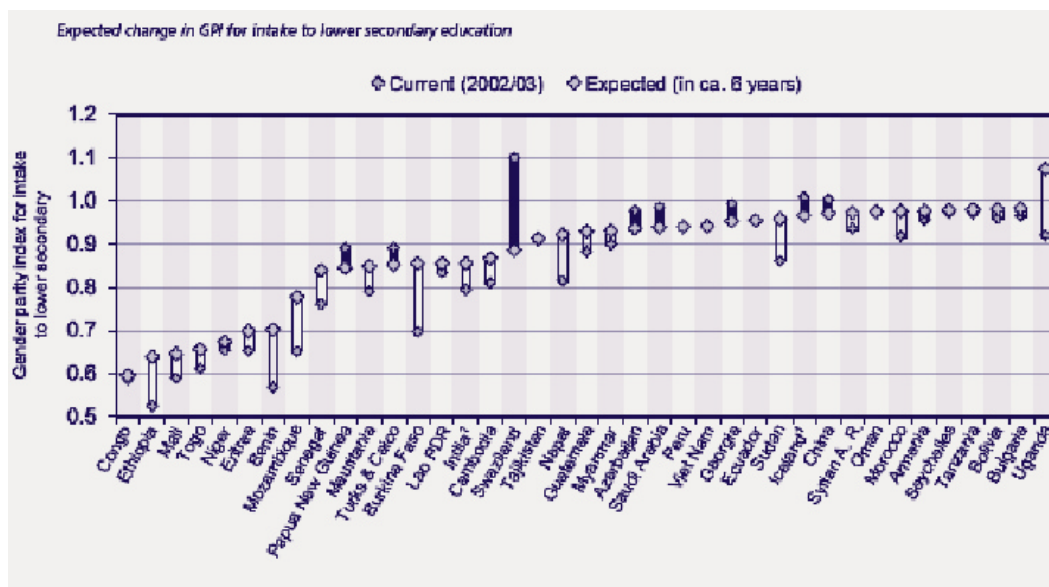
Source: UNESCO, 2005. *Global Education Digest 2005: Comparing Education Statistics across the World*. Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), p. 23. Retrieved October 20, 2006, at www.uis.unesco.org/template/pdf/ged/2005/ged2005_en.pdf

lower secondary at 40 per cent; one-fourth of the countries have rates below 25 per cent. The situation is even more bleak in upper secondary education, with the majority of the ESAR countries having GERs between 20 and 30 per cent, and 20 per cent of countries reporting GERs below 10 per cent.

Of note is the disconnect between primary and secondary GERs for countries such as Madagascar, Malawi, Rwanda, and Uganda. Primary GERs seem to have grown very fast in these countries, without a corresponding increase in secondary GERs. This suggests that children who complete primary school are not moving into secondary school. UNESCO (2005: 20) predicts that the ratio of children entering the last grade of primary school in Burundi, Comoros, Eritrea, Madagascar, Rwanda, and Tanzania will increase by more than one-third. This will create increased pressure for entry into lower secondary school. Only one-fourth of the countries in Africa have transition rates above 80 per cent.



Figure 3. Current and expected gender disparities



Note: Data refer to 2001.

Source: UNESCO. 2005. *Global Education Digest 2005: Comparing Education Statistics Across the World*. Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), p. 29. Retrieved October 20, 2006, at www.uis.unesco.org/template/pdf/ged/2005/ged2005_en.pdf

Figure 2 shows the relationship between entry into primary school, reaching the last grade of primary, and expected intake into secondary for several countries with overall low access to secondary education (UNESCO 2005: 23, Figure 13). In Eritrea, for example, 60 per cent of the total number of children of the age to enter primary school actually entered in 2001/02. Of those, 86 per cent – half of the primary-school-aged population – reached the last grade of primary. Of those, just 82 per cent entered lower secondary or about 41 per cent of the school-aged population. In Ethiopia, 85 per cent of the primary-school-aged population enter primary and about 45 per cent complete primary, with almost all of those entering lower secondary.

In Ethiopia, then, more children drop out before completing primary school, while in Eritrea, compared with Ethiopia, fewer enter primary, but fewer drop out in primary, even though relatively more end their school careers at the completion of primary. “Lower secondary participation is limited by access to primary education in Eritrea, while in Ethiopia it is due to primary school dropout” (UNESCO 2005: 24). Tanzania sees only 20 per cent of its primary school completers continue into secondary, while in Ethiopia most children continue. It is expected that entry into lower secondary will increase by over 20 percentage points in the next five years in Madagascar (UNESCO 2005).

As far as the gender gap is concerned, the data unequivocally affirm that with the exception of a handful of generally more affluent countries, more boys than girls are enrolled in secondary education programmes. Similar to Lewin’s (2004a, 2004b) analysis of post-primary education in all of Africa, the present data indicate that, as a general rule, countries with secondary GERs over 50 per cent have achieved (or exceeded) gender parity at this level.¹² Figure 3 predicts how gender disparities will change when the cohort entering in 2002 will reach secondary school (UNESCO 2005: 29, Figure 18). The countries included in Figure 3 are those where girls are disadvantaged in entry to lower secondary, and six others with gender parity that is expected to become a disparity. Of the ESAR countries included in Figure 3, Swaziland and Uganda are expected to increase in disparity, with girls favoured in Uganda (changing from above 0.9 to almost 1.1), and boys in Swaziland (from about 1.1 to less than 0.9). Overall, most countries are expected to improve, with Mozambique showing the largest gains of those countries analysed in Figure 3.

Lewin (2004a: 19) argues that “patterns of participation at secondary level are heavily skewed by household income”. On the basis of his analysis of DHS¹³ data sets, he claims that:

Children from the richest 20% of households have on average more than 11 times the

chance of reaching grade 9 than those from the poorest 40% of households.[footnote omitted] Gender is least important in explaining differences in enrolment amongst the richest 20% where boys are more likely to be enrolled in the ratio of 53% to 47%. Amongst the poorest 40% the ratio boys/girls is 79%/21% for participation at grade 9. (p. 19.)

Gender biases compounded by poverty have led to targets for gender parity being missed in many countries worldwide.

35 countries will miss the 2005 Millennium Development Goal target for eliminating gender disparities in primary education; 68 countries will miss the 2005 target for eliminating gender disparities in secondary education; 27 countries will miss both targets; and 76 countries will miss one, the other, or both. (Save the Children 2005, footnote 1, citing UNESCO 2003).

While it appears that gender parity in primary education in ESAR is, on average, on target, 21 million children remain out of primary school (UNICEF 2005a). Gender parity in ESAR, then, “translates into boys and girls equally out of school” (UNICEF 2005a: 16).

Chapter Notes

¹ Readers should be reminded of the well-known weaknesses with these types of data. Because different sources report data differently, it will appear that there are some inconsistencies with how we present data. The presentation of data in this document is to provide a general sense of patterns only.

² Net enrolment/attendance rate (NE/AR) refers to the number of pupils in the theoretical age group for a given level of education – primary in this instance – enrolled in/attending that level expressed as a percentage of the total population in that

age group. In contrast to the NER (net enrolment ratio), the gross enrolment rate (GER) refers to the total number of pupils in school, regardless of age; this accounts for over-age students.

³ The gender parity index (GPI) indicates the ratio of girls to boys. A GPI of 1 indicates parity between the sexes; above 1.0 indicates that more girls are enrolled; below 1.0 indicates that more boys are enrolled.

⁴ Data on net enrolments are not available for Angola, Comoros, Somalia, and Uganda. The data indicated here vary slightly from those reported in Table 1. Table 1 reports NE/ARs (UNICEF 2005c) while these are indications of NERs (UNICEF 2005a).

⁵ It is also important to view these results in the context of social and economic issues. Particularly important is how poverty is implicated in gender disparities.

⁶ Gross enrolment ratio refers to the number of pupils enrolled, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the theoretical age group for the same level of education. GERs above 100 occur because overage pupils are included.

⁷ A complete analysis of this trend, however, is beyond the scope of this document.

⁸ Data are unavailable or incomplete for Angola, Comoros, Somalia, and Zambia. Furthermore, data on gross primary graduation rates in the region are insufficient to make any meaningful conclusions.

⁹ Transition rates from primary to secondary area based on the number of new entrants to the first grade of secondary education (general programmes only) in a given year, expressed as a percentage of the number of pupils enrolled in the final grade of primary education in the previous year.

¹⁰ Information is not available for Angola, Somalia, and Tanzania.

¹¹ Information is not available for Angola, Mozambique, Somalia, and Tanzania.

¹² According to UNESCO (2006), at the lower secondary level, Lesotho and Madagascar are exceptions. Lesotho's GER is 45 per cent and the GPI is 1.29, while Madagascar shows a 25 per cent GER and 0.98 GPI. Madagascar, then, has a nearly equal number of children not in lower secondary school, while more boys than girls in Lesotho make up the population of out-of-school children at this level.

¹³ Demographic and Health Survey.

3

Transition to Post-Primary Education



In light of the strides being taken throughout the world towards universal primary education (UPE), notes of concern about lack of attention to post-primary and more specifically secondary education are increasingly echoed in the recent literature and the development agency discussions (e.g., Lewin 2005; UNESCO 2005; World Bank 2005). There is a growing concern that a narrow focus on primary education is too limited. At the same time, the talk of moving to a focus on post-primary education is also problematic if it leaves behind primary education concerns.

3.1 Post-primary education: A necessary focus for reaching EFA and MDGs

Lewin (2005) argues that the major focus put by governments and development agencies on the two commitments within the MDGs and EFA goals most directly associated with educational development — universal enrolment and completion of primary schooling, and gender equality in primary and secondary school access and achievement — is short-sighted at best. He cautions that it “has resulted in major shifts in investment in education in many poor countries to favour expanded primary schooling to the extent that some now allocate as much as 70 per cent of the recurrent budget to this” (p. 409), to the detriment of development at other levels. Commenting on the relatively low percentage of World Bank lending and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) grants to secondary and vocational education, Lewin (2005) summarizes that:

... what is clear is that policy for secondary development in many countries with low enrolment rates has been a low priority, data on the sub-sector is often poor, unreliable or non-existent, and inclusion of post-primary issues in medium-term budgetary frameworks has been treated more often on a historic and residual basis than within a systematic and developmental plan. (p. 412)

Similarly, in their study on the employment outcomes of secondary school and university graduates, Al-Samarrai and Bennell (2003) argue that:



secondary schooling and electing to train as teachers, the supply of adequately qualified primary teachers will fall short of demand" (p. 410).

3. The commitment to achieving gender equity at primary and secondary levels requires concerted action at secondary level, which is where gender differences in participation and achievement become more pronounced.

4. As primary schooling becomes more universal, lack of post-primary

options will further marginalize the already disadvantaged, thus adversely affecting their life chances. When secondary education is limited, it is primarily the upper income families whose children are served.

5. It is at the secondary school level that students can develop "knowledge, skills, and competencies associated with abstract reasoning, analysis, language and communication skills, and the applications of science and technology", essential to success in the job market and national competitiveness (p. 410).
6. Some of the other development goals cannot be reached without expanding post-primary education.²

In addition, Lewin makes the case that current cost structures are not sufficient to attain increased access and participation. With low rates of funding for secondary schooling, relative to primary, combined with higher costs of secondary schooling, the likelihood of expanding secondary education significantly is not possible. Finally, curriculum reform is necessary to address concerns about quality in schools. When families feel that what goes on inside schools is useful and worthwhile, their children are more apt to remain in school. Content, materials, and pedagogy are often outdated and ineffective. Making schools hospitable places where all children are comfortable and safe is a necessary precondition for improving educational enrolment, attendance, attainment, and achievement.

... the deterioration in the quality of university education in many African countries has far-reaching consequences that have still not been properly recognized by most governments and donor agencies. Very poor examination results in secondary schools are also symptomatic of chronically under-resourced schools and poorly trained and motivated teachers. However, given the importance that is currently attached to the attainment of universal primary education, there is a danger that secondary and higher education will be neglected. The attainment of universal primary education at the expense of secondary and higher education would have disastrous consequences for human resource development. (p. 83).

The key message, underscored by Lewin (2005), is that "without expanded access beyond primary it is unlikely that MDGs and DGs¹ will be achieved" (p. 409). Lewin states several reasons why new policies are needed for expanding participation in post-primary education, including:

1. Efforts to universalize primary education have already resulted in the substantial increases of students completing primary schools, whereas secondary education is far from keeping pace. For example, "in Uganda and in Tanzania, primary school graduates will multiply between two and three fold before 2010 with no prospect of similar rates of growth in secondary school entry" (p. 409).
2. The sustainability of UPE is directly dependent on improved access to post-primary institutions – "without adequate numbers successfully completing

3.2 Defining and conceptualizing post-primary education

In this paper we conceptualize post-secondary education broadly, focusing on age, educational level, and mode of education, as described below:

- *Age:* While primary school is usually intended to end at about age 12, we realize that many older children are in primary grades, while others have moved on to secondary school, are in nonformal education programmes, or are not in school at all.
- *Educational level:* This would include secondary school, higher education and teacher education, technical and vocational programmes, etc.
- *Mode of education*³: formal schooling, nonformal education initiatives, and informal learning experiences for adolescents and young adults.

Secondary schooling is seemingly the most prominent element of this broad conceptualization. However, it is important to consider a more flexible and adaptive approach to address all of the needs of adolescents – both boys and girls – if we hope to reach the MDGs and EFA goals, promote sustainable development, and achieve gender equity. Expanding secondary schooling and improving its quality are critical, but this focus alone is not sufficient. For real change to occur, we must address deeper issues of gender equity (Stromquist 1999).

In addition to meeting academic goals, adolescent girls and young women have particular life cycle and age-specific needs. Concerns associated with puberty, pregnancy, childrearing, marriage, and reproductive health come into play, as does an interest in economic sustainability. Life skills education that addresses these issues is critical. Underlying these types of life issues and concerns are certain understandings of gender relations in one's community and culture. Post-primary-age girls and young women are often quite interested in examining these deeper issues related to gender relations. Examples can include women's rights (legal and human rights); beliefs and knowledge about sexuality; and cultural beliefs about community, family, and male-female relationships. In several countries male youth also confront gender-

specific issues and challenges. Especially in countries where gender parity favours girls, boys may, like girls in the examples above, need spaces in which to explore issues such as economic opportunity, violence, human rights, fatherhood and marriage, and gender relations. Talking about these sensitive issues openly and directly can help to put on the table the underlying issues about justice, fairness, equity, democracy, and the like.

Young women⁴ of post-primary age can be found in formal schooling (e.g., primary schools [GCE 2005], secondary schools, and universities) and in nonformal educational programmes where they may learn conventional subjects (literacy, language development, civics, math, science, foreign languages, etc), vocational or technical skills (including teacher education), life skills or health awareness. Or, they may find themselves outside these institutional structures but still learning about a wide variety of topics and ideas. Post-primary-age young women learn in arenas as diverse as community development programmes, health education initiatives, while socializing with friends and neighbours, and being exposed to media, as well as in formal and nonformal educational settings.

Hierarchically, the levels of education are intertwined and interdependent. We should be moving into post-primary, but without abandoning primary education. With increasing numbers of primary school completers, more spaces are urgently needed in secondary school. And, to provide teachers for the growing primary school populations, more teachers are needed, particularly women teachers. To this end, the pipeline through secondary school needs to expand in order to have sufficient secondary school completers to enter teacher training programmes.

The lines between the various types of education – formal, nonformal, informal – are becoming blurred, and this blurring needs to be encouraged so that educational needs can be met in a variety of ways, using a variety of approaches, and involving a variety of participants. Also, as life conditions change, students can move back and forth from system to system as needed. In addition, the traditional categories are not as consistent as they once were presumed to be. Basic education usually refers to primary education, but in some places includes lower secondary school, and other countries offer basic education through nonformal education to adolescents, young adults, and older adults. Furthermore, while

formal and nonformal systems were once very distinct, with no possibility of entering the formal system from a nonformal programme, we now have good reason to encourage more of the approaches that promote flexibility and movement across systems. A seamless system will increase access and completion and encourage higher quality overall.

Just as girls and young women have particular interests and needs, so do boys and young men. As we move into post-primary, it will be important to educate boys and young men in gender-equitable ways, and to educate all children in ways that allow them to reconstruct gendered cultural patterns. Gender inequities are perpetuated through gender relations, which are cultural products of particular communities. All participants in these social relationships, then – boys and girls, women and men – need to develop gender equitable patterns of living and learning if we expect sustainable changes. In Stromquist's (1999) comparative study of Latin America and Africa, she finds that the trend is towards quality and efficiency rather than equity. Gender asymmetries in societies underlie gender asymmetries in schooling, so if we want more dynamic change, focus must include such processes as the social construction of gender and gender relations.

Finally, with the influences of globalization and our changing local and global contexts, new opportunities are created, and educational approaches must not only respond, but be proactive in shaping who has access to those opportunities and how they will engage in those opportunities. Gender, again (along with class and rural/urban regional patterns) becomes critical. Girls and young women must be included in technology and vocational programmes that challenge gender bias, so that their life choices are not unduly limited. Similarly, boys and young men must be involved in life skills and health programmes (among others) if we expect changes in adolescent sexual behaviour that involves youth of both sexes. At the same time, careful attention must be given to such policies so that inequities that favour women do not replace those that have historically favoured men. In several ESAR countries more girls attend school than boys. This could result in a new series of policies needed to encourage boys' participation in schooling. How girls and boys engage in what schools have to offer is an area for which we need more research.

However, preparation for work is not the

only concern related to globalizing tendencies. Access to a variety of types of knowledge beyond that used for work preparation is also a concern. Emancipatory knowledge, for example, is necessary for empowerment to occur. How and where knowledge is conveyed and constructed is much more complex than in past eras. As mentioned, formal, nonformal, and informal modes of education are all potential tools. The media, along with a variety of information and communication technologies (ICTs), are changing rapidly and are increasingly influential in many communities.

Media are more readily available both as a tool and as the carrier of ideas and cultural knowledge that loosen the control local communities have on outside influences. Societies can be conceptualized as embodying traditional, transitional, and learning cultures (Mead, as cited in Carroll 1990). In traditional cultures, access to new knowledge is controlled by elders, and it is passed down through the generations. In learning cultures, new knowledge can be introduced by anyone and from anywhere, so not only do children and youth learn from adults, adults also learn from youth and children or from such sources as the media or cultural outsiders. Transitional cultures are in between: knowledge transmission is beginning to move in multiple directions, but with limits. No country, at our present point in history, is isolated completely from outside influences. Therefore, understanding the multiple, varied, and sometimes conflicting modes of knowledge acquisition and transmission is critical.

Media comprise a powerful mechanism for challenging traditional forms of cultural transmission and knowledge production. But media can support gender bias, however, just as much as challenge it. Post-primary education must learn to use the media for the benefit of marginalized youth, particularly girls and young women. A broad focus on post-primary education of girls needs to include girls in and out of school, in the full range of educational settings (e.g., including learning through the media, in community organizations, development programmes, health centres). All institutional partners also need to be considered, from the family and community, to schools, religious institutions, NGOs, grassroots groups, governments, donor agencies, multilateral organizations, media production companies or offices, local businesses, and multinational corporations. Indeed, we suggest a "knowledge construction" model, as opposed

to knowledge transmission; this positions the learners as actively engaged in their own learning and not mere passive recipients of uncontested knowledge.

3.3 Adolescent girls' needs and learning experiences

The life cycle and age-specific needs of adolescent girls are significantly different from those of younger girls because of biological changes and changes in their roles in society and the family. Adolescent concerns pertain to physical and psychological health, economic activity, and participation in social and civic life beyond the family (DeJaeghere, 2004). As such, programmes and curricula should be designed to meet the particular needs of adolescent girls, including types of knowledge and skills that are empowering or emancipatory.

3.3.1 Economic activity

Girls are often looking to a future of work either in the formal sector or in informal income-generation schemes. Post-primary educational experience should include skill development and knowledge generation that will be useful in earning a livelihood. It has long been understood that women engage in sustenance or income-earning activities at high rates in African countries, and that this economic activity, whether formal or informal, is critical for national development (Boserup 1970). While women are more involved in training programmes than in earlier decades, there are often gender differences in completion rates. For example, a draft report on language and education in Africa reports that

... the dropout rate during the four years of training in [a Malian development education centre for 9–14 year olds] is very high especially for girls during the 4th and last year of schooling. The major reason for the dropouts is the lack of a focused professional training. In some communities, [centres] are somehow seen as training future “jobless” people.¹

On the other hand, the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh has a microcredit programme that provides small loans to the poorest of the poor in Bangladesh without requiring collateral; 97 per cent of the borrowers are women. The lending process involves not only money, but

also the development of social capital through small group processes in which borrowers learn the “16 decisions”, which focus on trust, collective development of a social agenda, and self-governance.

Raynor (2005) shows how education, economic sustainability, and gendered social conventions are intertwined in Bangladesh. For many, higher levels of education for girls would require higher dowries to be paid on marriage, thus increasing the economic burden on the girls' family. Some parents disagreed, however: “... a girl who's educated can stand on her own two feet and look after herself. Marriage isn't as essential for her as it is for someone who's not educated” (Raynor 2005: 95). Another mother stated that “...we're educated, we can work on our own, we can survive on our own. There's no need to get us married now” (ibid).

Economic needs cannot, at this point in history, be fully satisfied through secondary education. Socioeconomic infrastructure is not sufficiently developed in many countries to provide jobs to all secondary school graduates. Income-generation opportunities outside of the formal job market can stimulate local development in ways that cannot be done through secondary education. In addition, economic interests are intertwined with other life concerns. Because people's lives are diverse, approaches to serving the educational needs of post-primary-aged youth should also be diverse.

3.3.2 Participation and leadership in social and civic life

Like boys, girls become more involved in life beyond the family as they mature. Even in cultures where women are sequestered, many are active in collectivities and women's groups designed for mutual support and income generation, and they organize around issues of concern. During the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan, for example, many girls were sent to home schools and underground schools despite girls' education being prohibited (Manzo 2006; Bearak 2000). Whether involvement in social life is sex segregated or not, young women can benefit from becoming empowered in this realm. Women in many cultures have primary responsibility for their young children and their educations; being empowered to enable daughters to continue in school is but one area where this is important. Stambach's (2000) gendered analysis of secondary school in a Tanzanian community reveals that “the symbolic wealth and cultural capital that school

provides as a discursive, symbolic system” provided some young women “with a degree of authority” not granted to them traditionally (pp. 108–9). She recounts examples of how the social value gained by virtue of getting a secondary education rivalled that gained through marriage, making space for more autonomous decision making in one’s life.

3.3.3 Psychological, physical, and reproductive health

Puberty brings on both physical and cultural change. Sexual activity, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and HIV/AIDS are the most obvious concerns regarding post-primary-aged girls. Negotiating one’s emerging sexuality, amid cultural expectations and practices, requires more than cursory mention of these topics in girls’ lives. Being able to resist demands for sexual activity is not a simple matter, as it is often intertwined with social valuing of girls. In *Voices of Young Zimbabweans* (Tapela and Mareneke 2004) adolescents reveal the double bind in which girls can find themselves. They need the protection of boys (i.e., brothers) from being sexually harassed by other boys, and thus kept “pure” for marriage. But a girl’s social worth is often measured by having a boyfriend, and sexual activity becomes an indication of the strength of that relationship.

At the same time, boys can pursue sex as a way of asserting selfhood and social worth; some of those boys stated how they “discard” girls after having sex with them, because they are no longer potential marriage partners because of having lost their virginity. These “voices” of adolescents, in and out of school, reveal ways of thinking that reflect inequities in gender relations: while girls can be complicit in these patterns, they rarely benefit from them. Educating adolescent girls *and* boys is critical, not only about health concerns, but also about societal and cultural norms, and, for girls, about their own agency in resisting and challenging practices that are not in their best interest. The Zimbabwean “voices” reveal that with the high rates of HIV/AIDS deaths and resulting absence of parents and “aunties” (who serve as resources and mentors for adolescents), many youth rely on each other to figure out how to navigate adolescence and early adulthood. Tapela and Mareneke (2004) convincingly show how HIV/AIDS can function to reinforce the objectification of girls as sexual objects.

3.3.4 Emancipatory knowledge

Life cycle changes during adolescence, whether related to economic activity, health issues, or engaging in public life, can entail educative processes and content that reinforce the societal status quo, or that change inequitable gender relations. Helping girls to become employed will help them to earn money, but helping them also to see themselves within a broader set of gendered economic relations can promote a form of empowerment that may minimize the inequities inherent in some forms of work and employment relations. Similarly, learning to see oneself in a context defined by particular gendered social relations enables informed decisions about maintaining or changing them. Emancipatory knowledge (Stromquist 1995, 1999) is what helps to free girls and women from oppressive gender relations. Similarly, Molyneux (1985) argues that we would need to address *strategic gender needs* (SGNs) in addition to *practical gender needs* (PGNs) in order for change to be possible (see also Moser 1993). SGNs focus on the underlying cause of gender inequities. PGNs refer to immediate needs, but solving them does not eliminate the causes that brought them about. Aikman and Unterhalter (2005) argue that gender analysis needs to include structured reflection in the curriculum. Through this structured reflection emancipatory knowledge becomes integral to educative processes that empower women and girls. Forms of emancipatory knowledge can include, among others, legal, human, and women’s rights; sexuality; fluency in high status language (e.g., official languages, colonial languages, languages of commerce); and an active examination, analysis, and critique of gendered social and cultural structures and norms that restrict equality, equity, and empowerment.

3.3.5 Sexuality

Sexuality becomes a more salient issue during adolescent years.⁶ Adolescent girls and boys develop sexual identities and often begin engaging in sexual relationships. This is also a time when girls and boys are being prepared for their traditional gender roles in society; sometimes new cultural expectations arise or are strengthened. Girls can also become sexual prey in some circumstances (Raynor 2005: 96). HIV/AIDS presents another set of issues that affects adolescent girls in unique ways. Girls are often called on to be caregivers for parents and siblings. With the added responsibilities of loss of family members due to HIV/AIDS deaths, they are left more vulnerable to the

influences of others if they are not knowledgeable about their options. (See Section 3.5.7 for more discussion of HIV/AIDS.)

Sexuality has historically been incorporated into development projects primarily in relation to population control; more recently attention to knowledge about sexuality has emerged in relation to HIV/AIDS. The understanding of sexuality is expected to lead to a more deliberate control of fertility, reduced numbers of births, and a reduction in STDs. However, sexuality is an important topic for other reasons. The control of one's own sexuality relates to self-determination with a wide variety of issues: the practice of safer sex (re: HIV/AIDS and STDs), examining and perhaps redefining the role that sexual activity plays in relationships and identity issues, among many others.

3.3.6 Women's rights and human rights

Situating curricular issues within a human rights frame provides a way for students to become empowered in demanding their own rights, and making choices that do not compromise the rights of others. Learning about the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and UN human rights conventions, for example, enables girls to know that they have a right to education (Convention on the Rights of the Child [CRC] and Universal Human Rights), a right to be free of violence (CEDAW), and other rights. Becoming aware of women's legal rights (e.g., land ownership, inheritance, and voting)

is a prerequisite to demanding them. As girls become women, this form of emancipatory knowledge will enable them to recognize the inequalities in demands placed on them. Tostan's work is an example; this NGO's curriculum focuses on reproductive health concerns (sexuality), women's rights, and human rights (Tostan 2006). Issues commonly identified by participants after concluding Tostan's nonformal education project relate to the cultural practice of female genital cutting (FGC) and domestic violence.

3.3.7 Language and literacy

About two-thirds of the world's adults who are not literate are women. As more girls are educated and grow up, the literacy rate of women is expected to improve. Beyond basic literacy, there may be important gendered dimensions of choices about language use in schools. In many countries the mother tongue (or first language) is used in early primary grades, with increasing use of official or colonial languages in later years. This transition occurs at different ages. The Asian tiger countries⁷ tend to transition after fourth grade. In other countries transition occurs during secondary school. While mother tongue instruction is necessary for acquiring literacy and gaining access to the content of schooling, second languages are increasingly beneficial, particularly as globalization progresses.

Fluency in a language of wider usage is often required for access to technologies such as computers and the Internet, national and international media, and knowledge where



information is not translated into local languages. Although both boys and girls should develop fluency in both local and national/international languages, girls appear more vulnerable in acquiring fluency, particularly in national/international languages. Where girls drop out of school prior to the development of these languages, they are at a disadvantage; as long as there is a gender gap in attainment at the levels where students have access to learning these languages, girls will be further disadvantaged.

There appears to be a lack of in-depth research linking the language of instruction with girls' participation rates (cf. Benson 2002). We should also question whether there is a relationship between the time of transitioning to national/international languages and changes in gender parity or equity at that same age/grade level. We need to look beyond participation rates at the politics of language of instruction and gender implications. What languages are used for what purposes, by whom, and when? How are local languages being used in higher levels of schooling or with academically complex material? Are local languages relegated to the realms of home, the family, and women's work, while national/international languages are used in domains more frequented by men and boys, or with more abstract or complex concepts? How is language development and use implicated in gendered patterns in education and in community life? What areas of knowledge are accessed by what languages? Are there gender patterns to that access?

A third issue related to gender and language of instruction concerns participation in classrooms. Learning languages well requires using them, and if some students are self-conscious about their language abilities, they may not speak up in class, thus limiting their practice with the language. In many countries, girls are less active participants in the classroom (even when language abilities are equal); and as they mature, self-image can become more intertwined with how one engages in classroom activities. One learns languages through practice, so quieter students may not learn them as well. Research is needed on these topics in developing countries. Mauritania may be an interesting case study to watch, with three languages used for different subjects: Arabic for social studies, English for technology, and French for other subjects. How do gender patterns in course selection relate to language abilities developed in different languages?

3.3.8 Gender analysis

As mentioned previously, focus on girls is important when goals relate directly to girls. Underlying issues such as low enrolment are the structures that continue to give rise to the inequities. Usually these structures disadvantage girls, but certain dynamics also disadvantage boys in some regions. Changing gendered patterns in schooling statistics, such as enrolment, requires paying close attention to the causes of those patterns. Since adolescents are learning to take their place in life as adults, it is an optimal time for them to examine the influences that create these inequities. An active critique of gender relations, poverty, and other social phenomena that privilege some people while disadvantaging others should be embedded in the education of both girls and boys. However, awareness of these issues is not enough; adolescents can also learn strategies for initiating and engaging in social change. Here a closer link between the fields of *gender and development* and *gender and education* would be valuable.

3.4 Importance and benefits of post-primary education

We can define three levels of benefits of post-primary education: the individual level, the economic level, and the social and health level.

3.4.1 Individual benefits

Adolescence is a time of identity formation. It is a time when youth develop an understanding of the world and of their place and purpose in it. It is also a time of active reflection on one's life aspirations and one's ways of engaging with the world. It is critical that at this period of their lives adolescents, particularly girls, be exposed to education that can broaden their horizons, guide their identity development, inform their life choices, and empower them to achieve their highest potential. This age group has the greatest potential for changing its behaviour, and education can positively influence health-related, social and civic behaviours and values.

Gender inequities tend to become more pronounced as school levels increase. In many countries, gender inequalities are most severe in higher education (GCE 2005: 56). Improvements in post-primary education

through life skills programmes, job training or entrepreneurial management skill development, secondary schooling, or nonformal education for primary school equivalency or for specific purposes, will provide more role models for younger girls and will break down patriarchal views about gender and work (GCE 2005: 56).

3.4.2 Economic benefits

Economic returns to female secondary education are in the 15–25 per cent range. Wage gains from additional years of education tend to be similar if not somewhat higher for women than for men, and the returns to secondary education in particular are higher for women (Schultz 2002; Sutton 1998).

A 100-country study by the World Bank shows that increasing the share of women with a secondary education by 1 per cent boosts annual per capita income growth by 0.3 percentage points. This is a substantial amount considering that per capita income gains in developing countries seldom exceed 3 per cent a year (Dollar and Gatti 1999, as cited in Herz and Sperling 2004). The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) argues that free and universal access to secondary education is critical because

school leavers stand little chance of finding a job in the formal sector, unless they have performed well in their secondary-school leaving examinations. Moreover, many of the health and productivity benefits of educating girls are not fully unlocked until secondary education is attained. (GCE 2005: 56).

3.4.3 Social and health benefits

As already noted, the more education girls attain, the more improvements can be expected with regards to health. “As education expands women’s horizons, opens up better earning opportunities, and improves women’s position in the family and society, couples tend to have fewer children and to invest more in the health and education of each child” (Herz and Sperling 2004: 4). A 65-country analysis finds that the proportion of women with a secondary education would reduce average fertility rates from 5.3 to 3.9 children per woman. The authors conclude: “The expansion of female secondary education may be the best single policy for achieving substantial reductions in fertility” (Subbarao and Raney 1995: 124). In addition, under-five mortality rates are dramatically lower in children of women with secondary education compared to those with primary or no education (DHS data).

Girls engaged in post-primary education are role models for other girls to pursue further education.

Education also affects the spread of HIV. “An increasing body of research shows that more educated people, especially youth, are less likely to engage in risky behaviour and contract HIV” (Herz and Sperling 2004: 31). For example, young Ugandans with secondary education are three times less likely than those with no education to be HIV-positive (De Walque 2004). Women have been identified in many countries as being particularly vulnerable to HIV because of the promiscuity of their partners, prostitution, and sexual violence. The role that education can have, then, both directly (e.g., through sex education initiatives) and indirectly (less risky behaviours as a result of higher levels of education), serves as a strong call for more and better education for post-primary youth in general. However, a special focus on girls, with an emphasis on teaching them how to negotiate sexual activity in relationships where they may feel disempowered and subject to violence, is also of great value. Although the relationship between education and HIV/AIDS is undoubtedly complex, perhaps the more direct strategy involves keeping girls in school longer:

Simply keeping girls in school longer is an effective defence against HIV. Studies in Uganda and Zimbabwe found that girls who received primary and some secondary education had lower HIV infections rates than those who did not attend school, a trend that extended into early adulthood (DeWalque 2004, as cited in Save the Children 2005: 13, endnote 25).

Educational links to democratic social process and civic engagement, and to the sustainability of the environment and of community development, are areas where we need more information. Women are often key social figures in community management work, or voluntary work (Moser 1993). How does educational level and experience shape those social roles? In addition, a close relationship between women’s community concerns and environmental sustainability has been documented, but the role of education has not been examined.

3.5 Limitations and barriers to post-primary education

In this section we discuss primarily a variety of barriers to girls' education, including poverty, inadequate funding and facilities, the job market, health and safety concerns, and cultural and institutional barriers. First, however, we will discuss several broader concerns that limit possibilities for gender-equitable schooling: the limitations of a linear model of schooling, and the implications of discourse for shaping educational possibilities.

Most development agencies are focused on formal schooling – primary, secondary, and tertiary education – and argue that as primary enrolment approaches full enrolment, one should push for increasing secondary education opportunities for primary school graduates. This linear focus presents us with a perceptual barrier – if we focus only on those in the formal school system, we are ignoring children who might be served better through other approaches as well as those who cannot be served *until* formal schooling is universal. (That is, the current generations are sacrificed for future generations.) Should priority be given to secondary schooling at the expense of preparing for transition? Focus should be placed on a variety of building blocks that will lead eventually to full schooling for all children. These building blocks should include a wider variety of educational opportunities so that the current generation does not get left behind, and so that a wider array of forms of education can support development in order for secondary school graduates to have opportunities to use their education for the public good. When we narrow our vision to include solely traditional forms of formal education, we leave out the students who have no access to formal schooling, and we ignore the role of various forms of education in human, social, economic, and political development.

Other ways in which discourse limits our perceptions of possibilities relate to elitism and the ways we sometimes uncritically assume that formal schooling has higher social value than vocational or technical education, or when we assume that formal schooling is more beneficial than nonformal education. In many social contexts, a hierarchy such as this exists in the social valuing of different forms of education. Changing perceptions is integral to changing this hierarchical social valuing; other

approaches are legitimate and beneficial for individuals, communities, and nations. For example, BRAC (formerly the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) has created a nonformal education system primarily for girls, which has gained respect and become as legitimate as formal schooling. Several countries (e.g., Norway and Germany) have developed popular vocational-technical education systems because of their ability to prepare students for middle-class positions in society. When we assume that nonformal or vocational education is less important or less legitimate than formal or academic schooling, we limit our ability to frame the issues dynamically and to create nonformal or vocational systems that can transcend those limitations. Freeing our minds from the systems we know is the first step to revisiting goals and objectives, recognizing barriers, and creatively devising strategies to better education for all children. Thereby they will engage in cultural, social, economic, and political processes more constructively.

Experience has taught us that any condition that is bad for a region or nation is generally worse for girls. (Kane 2004: 3)

In addition to issues that affect the whole society which are often disproportionately meted out on females, older girls and young women face unique barriers. Beyond those barriers that affect girls of all ages, a variety of concerns are particularly relevant to post-primary-aged girls.

3.5.1 Poverty

Poverty affects conditions of the lives of girls and their families in wide-ranging ways, from quality of housing and availability of food and money, to creating conditions for increased illness and needs relating to the caring of others. During adolescence, expectations for earning money and/or growing food for subsistence increases for both boys and girls. However, gendered and cultural patterns can vary. Sometimes boys are kept in school longer because of anticipated economic benefits, while girls are seen to be more important in growing food and caring for siblings. Sometimes, however, boys have more economic opportunities, so they might be withdrawn from school, leaving girls to continue. These expectations increase in relation to economic needs in families and communities; poorer communities tend to need the participation of younger people. In addition, when poverty

increases, the out-of-school demands on young woman likewise increase. Women's triple role (Moser 1989) – caring for families, earning money in both the formal and informal sectors, and caring for community – has been well recognized in periods of economic downturn as women's traditional responsibilities in these areas become more critical. For example, collectively run soup kitchens sprang up in Peru during the economic hardships of the 1990s in order to help mothers feed their families after a long day at work. Kane (2004) characterizes the "least fortunate potential scholar" (based on the various indicators of who attends school and for how long) as "a poor rural Central or West African girl with brothers, whose family needs her labour and whose culture or religion places limitations on her future role and regards intellectual and physical protection as a way of ensuring her continued dependence and submission" (p. 61). This characterization makes clear that poverty, gender, family configuration, social and cultural norms, and religious beliefs are all important influences in educational experience. Poverty affects both adolescent girls and boys. Understanding how poverty affects girls and boys similarly and differently – including how traditional gender roles might be affected – is important in devising approaches to serving their particular needs. Beyond these direct needs, however, poverty limits or prevents families' abilities to pay the costs of schooling (including direct, indirect, and opportunity costs), and additional costs that often are required when a daughter is educated.

Direct costs of schooling include school fees. Many countries have recently eliminated these direct costs and have seen dramatic increases of enrolments. Uganda and Malawi are two examples (Kane 2004: 66). Indirect costs, such as uniforms, pens, paper, and transportation are not uncommon; and they can often present a significant challenge to families. In certain schools in Nairobi, pupils are required to buy a desk (Elimu Yetu Coalition 2005). Opportunity costs – the foregone wages and unpaid labour (including sibling care and domestic chores) of girls during their hours in school – can be critical to the economic survival of a family. At the secondary school level, education costs can account for 81 per cent of per capita expenditures for children from the poorest 20 per cent of the population (Kane 2004: 66, citing Mason and Khandker 1996 and Watkins 2000). Kane (2004: 17) argues that the full range of direct, hidden, and opportunity costs has not been adequately explored, and that "[g]ood interventions ...

require local analyses ..." so that strategies can address local realities.

Dowry costs⁸ can increase when daughters are educated. Raynor (2005: 95), in her study in Bangladesh, suggests that educational institutions pay a stipend in exchange for this increase in dowry to offset the economic hardship. This can be more accentuated in poor families who have made a bigger sacrifice: "Prospective families willing to take on such a girl [as a bride for a son] may ask more in dowry to compensate for her humble origins" (Raynor 2005: 94). However, dowry and brideprice arrangements are culturally specific. Knowing the particulars in context is necessary for understanding the economic ramifications of educating girls.⁹

Economic hardship can force families into situations that are not gender neutral in some regions. For example, girls might be forced into prostitution or into offering sexual favours in exchange for money to pay school fees and other direct or indirect educational costs. Again, it is important to understand particular local contexts to determine the effects of poverty on gender inequities in education. In many of the studies reviewed for this paper, poverty is the fundamental barrier to girls' post-primary education. Often, where poverty is alleviated, girls and boys are in schools in higher numbers, and gender parity is improved.

3.5.2 Funding of schools

Limited funding affects all underserved populations – girls, as well as poor, rural, and ethnic minority groups in many countries and regions. Post-primary-aged girls are at an increased disadvantage in many areas, since the shortage of schools is more dramatic than at younger ages and lower educational levels. Countries that have had the most success with girls' education have increased their own budgets; nevertheless, funding gaps remain. "Low income countries will still need substantial help – in the order of US\$5.6 [billion] per year in external resources – in order to achieve the education MDGs" (GCE 2005: 57, citing UNESCO 2002). As a significant part of the MDGs, gender parity is necessary to meet these goals. "The impact of increased financing for education for all through the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) will be limited unless it includes funding for programmes to get girls into school" (GCE 2005: 57). The same applies to post-primary education: to increase enrolment levels, girls must be explicitly included in strategies to increase enrolment.

FTI financing estimates also need urgent revision, to take into account the cost of implementing measures which can help to achieve gender equity – including the removal of fees and charges, the introduction of nationwide subsidy or incentive schemes for the poorest families, and positive steps to improve conditions for both teachers and students. (GCE 2005: 57-58)

Lewin makes a strong argument that “increased access and participation at secondary level is unattainable with current cost structures” (2005: 410, citations omitted). The costs of post-primary education are higher than at primary levels, while most countries spend a much smaller percentage of the budget on secondary than on primary. Lewin’s argument points to the need to reform current funding structures to accommodate the expansion of secondary schooling. Even though alternative models of education can be less costly than formal secondary schooling, current funding structures are inadequate.

3.5.3 Lack of conveniently located schools and school spaces

The main manifestation of inadequate funding is lack of schools and classrooms. However, as with all educational planning, this is partly a political issue. Decisions about where and for whom facilities should be built are political decisions. Because girls are not a high-status group in most societies, they are unable to influence these political decisions. Multilateral and bilateral organizations have had more clout, but even there, building schools is not as high a priority as other concerns for many organizations.

In addition to the outright lack of schools, the distance of a school from home has a negative effect on school enrolment for girls, particularly at the secondary level (Kane 2004: 73). Safety concerns prevent many families from sending daughters to remote schools where their supervision and security are questionable. Inconveniently located schools affect girls’ education over boys’ education disproportionately because of the safety concerns.

3.5.4 Underemployment of graduates/school leavers

Economic incentives (e.g., jobs, opportunities for generating income) are lacking in areas where a secondary or post-primary education does not lead to gainful employment. This discourages school attendance, since school

attainment has limited benefit in being able to generate income. Barriers related to the economic structure, then, exist for both boys and girls. As stated earlier, knowing gender-specific expectations and patterns in these areas is important for addressing them appropriately.

3.5.5 Lack of facilities

As girls get older, biological processes set them apart from boys. This requires spaces of privacy and girls-only toilet facilities. Menstrual cycles and biological reproduction processes require facilities that are particular to post-primary-aged girls. In some areas, girls do not attend school during menstrual cycles, thus missing time disproportionately.

3.5.6 Lack of pedagogical and emotional support in school

In many instances, academic support for girls is similar to that needed for boys. Where gender disparities exist in relation to attitudes about who needs school for what purposes, girls are often short-changed in what they get from their school experiences. Quality of instruction, as well as classroom materials, is important. “Girls are thought to be more sensitive to school quality than boys, and teacher quality affects demand for girls’ schooling more than that of boys” (Kane 2004: 71). Gender bias in images and text in books, posters, and other educational materials should be eliminated. As girls mature, this becomes more critical, since books present role models and imagery that is integral to identity development.¹⁰

While extensive research has been done in industrialized countries, we need more and better research in the global South to fully understand gender differences in social dynamics inside schools. Who is supported academically? How does this support occur? Is instruction of appropriate quality? How are emotional concerns addressed for boys and girls in schools? What types of gendered images are conveyed in educational materials? What influence do these materials and pedagogical practices have on gender relations in a society? A few studies have begun to emerge. Kiluva-Ndunda’s (2001) study of Kenyan women’s schooling experiences details their perceptions of barriers, including many of those noted in this section of this paper. Mungai’s (2002) study, *Growing Up in Kenya: Rural Schooling and Girls* tells the story of Wambui and her educational experience; it uses surveys of 172 seventh grade girls to

examine issues related to classroom culture and instruction, as well as family and community influences. Both Stambach (2000) and Vavrus (2003) examine the ways that meaning is conveyed in schools, including secondary schools in Tanzania. These studies reveal the critical necessity of understanding educational experience at deeper levels, as discourse, ideologies, and belief systems that influence identity and life decisions.

3.5.7 HIV and AIDS

The HIV/AIDS pandemic in Eastern and Southern Africa has required re-focusing attention across sectors to examine the ways in which education and HIV/AIDS are interrelated. Enrolment in formal schooling has decreased in some areas (GCE 2005: 57) because of children becoming sick and also having to care for sick family members. As teachers become infected, the numbers of available teachers is affected. More orphans and girls become more vulnerable, and sibling-care falls on the shoulders of older sisters, creating a “disproportionate caretaking burden” (UNICEF 2002: 11). In addition, a 20-year-old young woman in Zimbabwe explains that:

... almost everyone including the president has been affected by the pandemic. The economy has deteriorated as most people can no longer work. Teachers are dying, mine workers, MPs, headmasters and headmistresses... What worries me most is that the worst affected are young girls.... Older men take advantage of their weak economic position. Older men should leave younger girls alone!! They are not virus dumps!! If they really want to help, they can pay school fees, buy clothing, buy food, etc., without asking for any sexual favours in return! (UNICEF 2006: 2)

UNICEF and other organizations are increasing their attention to the relationship of education (schooling and learning outside of formal schooling) and HIV/AIDS. Girls are at the centre of this intersection, not only because of their caregiving responsibilities (boys are also taking on these tasks in some areas), but also because of their positioning in terms of societal notions of sexuality. Who has power in sexual relationships, and how is that power manifested and negotiated? Similar to the point made above, underlying assumptions, beliefs, and framing of policy issues is critical. Vavrus (2003) shows how HIV/AIDS and education intersect in a context where education is perceived to be a panacea, and how messages about safer sex are influenced by particular

beliefs about condom use and premarital sex. The complexities of understanding HIV/AIDS as a barrier to education go well beyond sibling care; it is an issue embedded in global discourses of health and schooling, religious beliefs (in some areas), gendered cultural practices, structural concerns, and the like.

3.5.8 Gender violence and safety in schools

Gender-based violence in schools leads to a loss of educational opportunity, stagnation of girls' school completion rates, and loss of national productivity (Wible 2004). Gender violence in schools takes forms such as disciplining in gender-biased manners, hitting, rape, and sexual exploitation. There are reported instances of gender violence being perpetrated by both boys (classmates) and male teachers. GCE recounts various examples of rape (by teachers or older male students), forced marriage, pregnancy, child labour, abduction, and harassment in Ethiopia. Community support is a critical part of strategies addressing these conditions (GCE 2003, 2005: 48). Ethiopia, of course, is not alone in these occurrences. Sexual abuse is widespread according to recent studies in Malawi, Uganda, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and other countries in other regions (Kane 2004: 74).

When girls are not safe – or are perceived not to be safe – in schools, their drop-out rates increase and attendance declines. Keeping all children safe in schools is important; keeping adolescent girls safe from sexual exploitation is critical because of the long-lasting consequences (e.g., pregnancy, STDs, HIV/AIDS, family concerns about purity for marriage). Some studies suggest that gender violence increases as girls get older (Kane 2004: 74).

War, armed conflict, civil war, and internal strife present challenges for everyone. Uganda, for example, has an estimated 1,500,000 internally displaced persons (UNICEF 2005d). The large number of children in this group obviously interrupts educational attainment and compromises quality. Both boys and girls are affected, but it remains clear that examining gender patterns is critical. Where boys are recruited as child soldiers, or where girls are at risk of increased incidents of rape, for example, gender remains an important influence on educational experience.

3.5.9 Social reproduction issues

Particular to the lives of post-primary-aged girls are concerns about pregnancy, childbearing, raising children, and other issues related to reproduction. In many places girls are no longer allowed or welcomed in schools if they become pregnant; school and pregnancy are seen as incompatible. Where young mothers are in school, nursing and caring for young children often conflict with the school's educational expectations of the adolescent mother. Furthermore, marriage and childbearing in some places carry social legitimacy as signs of adulthood that can compete with educational attainment as social markers. Understanding the social and cultural meaning of particular life events is important for fully understanding barriers to further education.

3.5.10 Cultural norms

The cultural beliefs and practices that are evident in existing documents and studies include beliefs about girls' need to be educated relative to boys, traditional gender roles (e.g., that see girls primarily in a domestic domain and not as wage earners), and the value of girl and boy children to birth families relative to the families into which they will marry. Various inconsistencies that validate removing girls from schools are also defined culturally, such as the incompatibility of teen pregnancy and parenthood with schooling.

In addition, practices such as early and forced marriage in some areas interfere with schooling, either interrupting it temporarily or preventing it where married girls cannot attend school. Elimu Yetu Coalition (2005) recounts the story of a girl in Kenya whose father ran out of money for her education. She was circumcised one year and stayed home the entire year, and she was married to a man her father's age the following year at age nine. She ran away from her husband repeatedly and was rejected in her father's house until the village chief intervened, threatening her father with jail. She was told to visit her husband on weekends and attend school during the week, but she was teased because she was "a married wife in school" (p. 109).

Beyond these particular examples of cultural beliefs and practices, however, there is a deeper element at work. This facet of cultural influence on girls' participation in education is aptly put by Kane (2004: 63):

As recent history shows, there is a "hidden" concern about girls' education related to the fact that, in times of rapid, unsettling change, women

in many cultures are seen as the symbolic core of the "true" culture, and some people fear that education could threaten their ability or desire to fulfil this role. This point cannot be overemphasized and takes on increasing importance in newly emerging nations and nations reasserting their political and religious identity.

In addition to specific cultural practices, then, the role that adolescent girls and women play in the maintenance of communities' cultural identity reflects a complex set of beliefs and experiences that is not easily wished away by simplistic educational policies and interventions. Cultural change cannot be controlled and is unpredictable. Cultural beliefs are real and must be well understood because educational interventions often challenge deeply held convictions. Either the culture will win out, or unintended consequences will emerge from forced cultural change. Furthermore, for post-primary-aged girls and boys, identity and identity formation are integrally tied up with culture. These complex relationships may present as barriers to educational policy and priorities, or they may be useful in serving educational goals. Again, a deeper understanding of these dynamics is necessary.

3.5.11 Institutional barriers

Institutional barriers to post-primary education include such things as age requirements for entry, examination systems, policies governing pregnancies, and school attendance, as well as many of the issues already mentioned (funding, privacy spaces, etc.). Here we will discuss only a few: policies about pregnant students, and social policies related to women's rights and access to social services.

Policies regulating pregnancies vary across countries. "Pregnant girls are reportedly expelled from school in Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda and Zambia, while the rules have been changed in Bolivia, Botswana, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Kenya, and Malawi" (GCE 2005: 48, citing Tomasevski 2003: 165). School management must also provide "a sympathetic and constructive environment..." that addresses girls' concerns and realities (GCE 2005: 49, citing Tomasevski 2003, quoting Fawe 2000). Beyond policy structures directly linked to schooling, laws about and access to abortion, family planning, and women's rights greatly influence life trajectories of adolescent and adult women, which, in turn, affect their schooling experiences.

3.5.12 What we know and don't know about barriers

A wide range of barriers affects girls' participation in post-primary education, but these are fairly general issues. Localized research is needed to contextualize barriers in particular locations and settings, so that planned strategies fit local realities.

The barriers are not isolated; they are overlapping and intertwined. (Cultural beliefs about sexuality, for example, are intertwined with policies about pregnant teens in schools. Where school spaces or buildings are in short supply and family finances are strained, pregnant girl students will likely be among the last to be sent to school.) A thorough understanding of those intersections is urgently needed. Strategies should not address isolated barriers, but should involve a package of interventions that can address multiple constraints. Closely related to this issue is the cross-sector nature of both the barriers and the strategies, as we will see in the next section of this paper. Barriers and strategies do not merely isolate social phenomena; they are affected by multiple sectors, organizations, institutions, and individuals.

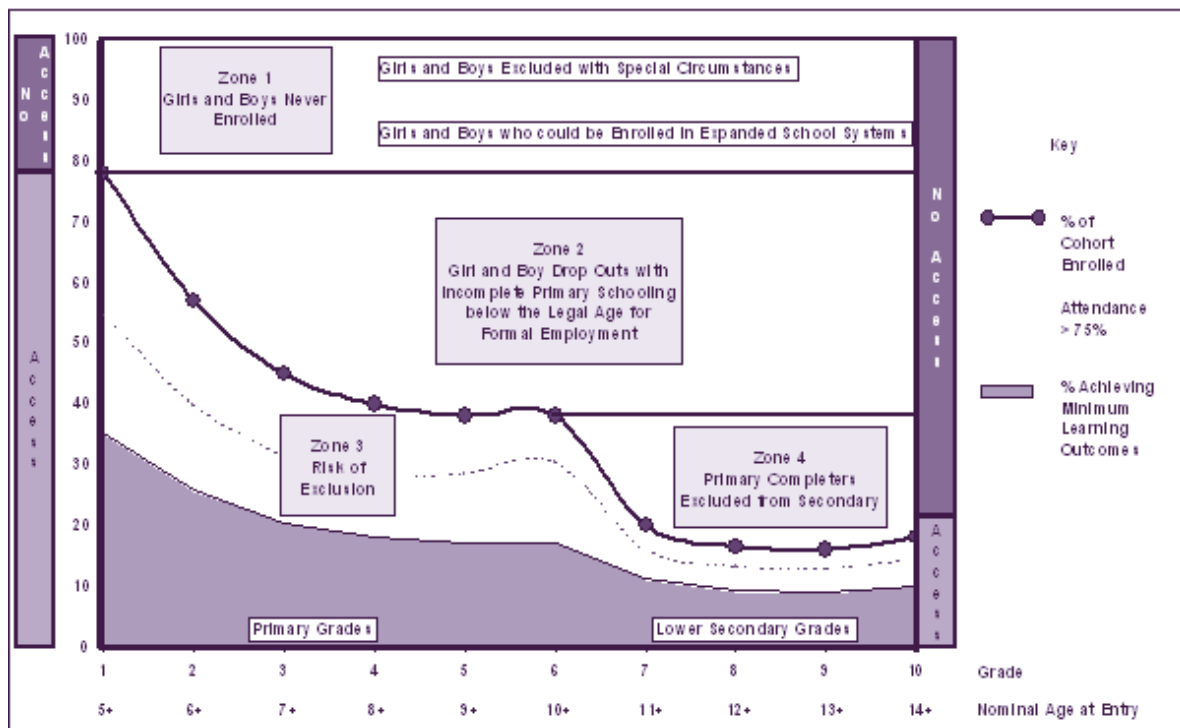
Lewin (2006) analyses the patterns of exclusion from primary and secondary

schooling and suggests that these patterns reflect target groups to consider in policy and planning. (See Figure 4.)

Although Lewin's (2006) analysis focuses on formal schooling, it has implications for a variety of types of post-primary education. While a significant portion of children who have never attended formal school (Zone 1) could be served in expanded formal school systems, many could potentially be served by alternative forms of education. More research is needed, however, on the circumstances that limit access. For example, strategies would vary for nomadic groups, areas of very low population density, or people in extreme poverty.

Zone 2 relates to girls and boys who have dropped out before completing primary school; they are not yet of legal age for formal employment. Lewin suggests that this group's educational trajectory is negatively influenced by experiences with "repetition, low achievement, poor teaching, degraded facilities, very large classes, household poverty, and poor health and nutrition (2006: 12). This group includes high numbers of girls, HIV/AIDs orphans, and other vulnerable children. This group would be well served both by alternative forms of education and by flexible avenues of re-entry into the formal system.

Figure 4. Access and zones of exclusion from primary and secondary schooling in sub-Saharan Africa



Source: Lewin, Keith M. 2006. Why Some EFA and Millennium Development Goals Will not Be Met: Difficulties with Goals and Targets. Investment Choices for Education in Africa, Education Conference, Johannesburg, 19-21 September 2006. <http://www.dbsa.org/other/educonference/Lewin.doc> or <http://www.create-rpc.org/pdf%20documents/dbsa.pdf> [retrieved 1/21/07], p.11.

Children in primary grades but at risk of dropping out are represented in Zone 3. Lewin (2006) includes in this group students who have high absentee rates, those whose achievement is low (thus limiting their ability to follow the curriculum), children who are discriminated against or who are ill or have nutritional deficiencies. While the formal school system could address some of these challenges, alternative approaches to education may better serve many of these children.

Exclusions from lower secondary school can relate to not being selected for entry, not being able to afford costs, or dropping out before primary school completion (See Zone 4 in Figure 4). “This exclusion is important for EFA since transition rates into secondary affect demand for primary schooling, primary teacher supply depends on secondary graduates, and gender equity at secondary is an MDG (Lewin 2006: 12). While increasing access to secondary schooling is one solution, other forms of education at post-primary levels can fill this gap, perhaps more quickly.

These four patterns suggest that the particular circumstances and context must be fully understood to enable solutions to fit the situation, and that formal schooling alone is not adequate. In addition, because barriers are situated in localized contexts, they need to be addressed by local or country-level initiatives. Interventions should be undertaken by those who are invested in and committed to them, and not imposed by the outside. Country-led interventions combine the optimal situations of local knowledge and “fit” while drawing on larger financial and power structures that are not available at local levels. Coordinated efforts at multiple levels are necessary, for they then draw on the particular strengths and resources of international organizations, country-level institutions, local knowledge, and on-the-ground resources of schools and community organizations, families, and individuals. However, as we have learnt from research on gender and development, attention to the power relationships among the various stakeholders is critical, if marginalized populations are going to have an active role in change.

Chapter Notes

¹ Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); Development Goals (DGs) of Education for All (EFA).

² See Lewin’s comments (2005) in the appendix (pp. 417-421) on the Dakar goals (EFA) and MDGs and their relevance to expanding secondary education.

³ LaBelle (1976) conceptualized learning as occurring in three modes: formal, nonformal, and informal. Formal education is schooling; it is organized and systematic and leads to higher levels and offers credentials and diplomas. Nonformal education is organized and systematic, but is historically not integrated into the formal school achievement hierarchies; exceptions within the past 15 or so years are significant, however. Informal education refers to learning that is incidental – learning that takes place alongside formal or nonformal education but that is not planned, that is incidental to living one’s life, that is the learning of culture (enculturation and acculturation). Since LaBelle’s conceptualization 30 years ago, these three modes of learning have become more fluid and intertwined, with more possibilities of moving between formal and nonformal systems of education, and, in some areas, more recognition of informal learning that occurs alongside formal and nonformal education.

⁴ The terms girls and young women are both used to refer to females of post-primary age. The term girls is used in much of the literature, but this does not distinguish the phase of post-primary from primary. Because they are adolescents, the term young women signifies this new life phase. Youth is often used for adolescents, but is sometimes used more for boys/males of this age range. The term young women is somewhat cumbersome, and so it is not used consistently herein.

⁵ Because this document is a draft and not yet citable, a reference is not included here. It does cite Marchand (2000) regarding this project and the experience of girls.

⁶ However, in some regions, knowledge about sexuality should be introduced earlier if girls are targeted for sexual exploitation.

⁷ Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Thailand.

⁸ While bride price is more common in African societies than is dowry, dowry is practiced in some regions. “[Dowry] is absent from Africa, except where that continent has been penetrated by Islam or other universalistic world religions, though the words dot and dowry are often used for bride wealth in francophone and anglophone areas” (Goody, 1973: 18). Increased dowry means more money expected from the bride’s family in marriage negotiations; this can present an economic difficulty. Examining the nature of the relationship between girls’ educational levels, and the social and economic valuing of girls as represented in bride wealth arrangements may vary across community and cultural contexts. (Does girls’ socioeconomic value increase with more education, or does the social valuing of education diminish, thus keeping bride wealth constant? As girls get more education than boys, how is boys’ ability to pay bride wealth affected?)

⁹ For example, in Lisa See’s novel, *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* (2005), literacy raised the social status of the daughter, which made her appealing to a higher status family. While dowry can be the most immediate economic requirement in these social relationships, there are also often longer-term economic benefits to one or both families, as social status is raised or lowered. In this book, the daughter’s family benefited from the social relationships with the family into which the daughter married. So, even when dowry was an economic challenge to them, there were longer-term economic benefits.

¹⁰ Dolby (2001), for example, examines how race and identity are re-shaped in a multiracial high school in Durban. While this ethnographic study does not fully address gender identity, it is an example of how a richer understanding of youth and identity can and should inform practice and policy. Studies of this depth that include gender are needed.

4

Strategies: Innovative Post- Primary Education



Here we present a range of strategies that have been tried in various regions, and also more detailed information, presented in boxes, on several examples. There is overlap among the categories of strategies discussed, as there is an integral intertwining of the various issues that cannot be neatly separated. The broader approaches (e.g., seamless, flexible, sector-wide, country-driven) are discussed in the subsequent section. In this section we concentrate on somewhat more focused examples, although readers should be aware that there are complex relationships and overlaps between these more specific strategies (in this section) and the broad policy or systemic approaches (in the next section).

Finally, we present these strategies as examples and possibilities – they are not a complete list and they are not all appropriate for all contexts. Each local community, region, and country should critically examine their own contexts, situations, and interests, and make informed decisions about what is appropriate.

4.1 Incentives

Incentive strategies are designed to address barriers related to poverty and alleviate economic hardship on families. Most recent research unequivocally points to poverty being a major decisive factor in participation in education, particularly at the secondary level, and often disadvantaging girls. Lewin argues that poverty is the most critical element, disproportionately affecting post-primary schooling:

... wealth is generally a more important determinant of enrolment at secondary than gender or urban rural location. Participation at secondary level is widely rationed by price. Private and some public secondary school systems have fees which widely exclude households below the second decile of household income. (Lewin 2005: 412).

While Lewin's analysis pertains to post-primary education specifically, and not gender, Kane (2004) looks more closely at the latter. In her review of the most recent literature on the effect of poverty on girls' education, Kane states: "the disparity between richer and poorer children in terms of educational participation is greater than disparities between urban and rural children, or between boys and girls, *although these, too, are considerable*" (p. 66, emphasis

added). One of Kane's more revealing examples of cost differentials across income levels, and at the secondary vs. primary level, pertains to the costs of education to families, relative to their income:

In 1993, Tanzania's wealthiest urban households spent ten times as much on primary schooling as the poorest rural households, but poor households spent a much larger percentage of their per capita income on education. Considering both direct and indirect costs, poor Tanzanian households spend one fifth of their income to send one child to school. The difference is even more dramatic at the secondary school level, where education costs account for 21 per cent of total per capita expenditures by families in the wealthiest quintile, compared with 81 per cent for children from the poorest quintile. (Kane 2004: 66)

Kane goes on to say, "together, poverty and costs, both direct and opportunity, are probably the single largest barrier to girls' participation in education. Addressing poverty first, within a culturally-sensitive context, makes good sense" (p. 122). Many of the existing studies strongly suggest that incentive strategies must be part of a broader package of support. Incentive strategies that have been tried include those discussed in the following paragraphs.

4.1.1 Abolishing school fees

Kenya, Malawi, and Uganda have eliminated school fees; and Benin has abolished fees for rural girls. In Uganda and Malawi, primary school enrolments have increased dramatically. While we do not know what the impacts are or would be at post-primary levels, some of the challenges at the primary level should be considered. In Malawi, enrolments increased, followed by a drop in school survival rate. However, they were unable to keep up with demand. With school survival at the primary level compromised, we can only ask, *Who* is moving on to post-primary options, and *how* is this policy and economic context affecting certain populations (e.g., rural and urban; girls and boys) in their school survival and progression beyond primary? While eliminating school fees will enable more children to enrol in school, additional concerns must be addressed in order to keep them in school and to understand why abolishing fees may not be enough for some students. Therefore, it is a necessary strategy, but it is not sufficient to reach the goals.

4.1.2 Stipends and scholarships

Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and other countries have experimented with paying stipends and scholarships. While stipends do little to alleviate indirect or opportunity costs (Kane 2004: 124), they have been useful, as demonstrated in the case study of Bangladesh's FSSAP (see Box A). Enrolment rates tend to increase dramatically. Bangladesh then also saw a sharp decline in child marriages, to 24 per cent from 29 per cent for girls aged 13–15, and to 64 per cent from 72 per cent for girls aged 16–19 (Kane 2004: 127; GCE 2005: 54). There remain questions about sustainability and the effect of these monetary payments beyond the individual students.

The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh gives scholarships to high performing children of borrowers who are the poorest of the poor, nearly all women; and priority is placed on girl children for scholarships. As of August 2006 over 31,000 children had received scholarships. In addition, one type of loan made to borrowers is for education at all levels of schooling and university education (Yunus 2006).

One African girls scholarship programme called Scholarships Plus provides "money for school fees, supplies, books, uniforms, and sometimes even shoes... and additional support" in 15 sub-Saharan African countries (UNGEI 2005b: 1). The project aims to provide 80,000 scholarships in a five-year period. The support beyond scholarships is intended to alleviate the life issues that often end girls' schooling. The U.S. Ambassadors' Girls' Education Program supports girls "in their schoolwork, in their families, and in their communities" (UNGEI 2005b: 3), based on the belief that their success will positively affect their lives and that of their families. However, a recent scholarship programme evaluation also documented that if some eligible girls receive the scholarships while others in the same school do not, this can lead to an increase in the dropout rate (Mushlin and Chapman 2006).

In Kenya, UNICEF is targeting girls in the north, where no girl has qualified for university entrance in more than a decade (Ibrahim 2006). In this arid region where nomadic families reside, the quality of primary schooling is low, and enrolment rates have dropped, despite removing all school fees in 2003. The secondary education scholarships programme provides 60 high-achieving primary school girls support for four years to send them to good secondary boarding schools in other regions. Professional women will also act as mentors to the girls.

Box A. Case study: Incentive strategies

Bangladesh's Female Secondary School Assistance Project (FSSAP)

The FSSAP provides tuition assistance and monthly stipends. The stipends cover the direct, out-of-pocket expenses that families incur in sending daughters to school. This is one of the primary factors affecting enrolment. Stipends for poor rural girls are continued provided the girls remain single, maintain a 75 per cent attendance rate, and achieve at least 45 per cent on their final exams (Kane 2004: 123). The stipends are accompanied by awareness campaigns, and each stipend recipient is given a passbook and can transact independently and withdraw cash from the bank. In the early years, an extensive information campaign was launched to raise public awareness on the importance of female education and the ensuing social and financial benefits (World Bank, 2003). In addition, women teachers are recruited, girls are trained for occupations upon leaving school, community participation is encouraged, and the school infrastructure is targeted for improvement. FSSAP's package approach incorporates multiple interventions (Liang, 1996). In addition, broad community membership is encouraged in the parent-teacher associations, which meet regularly to work on project-related issues.

The survival rate of girls in this stipend programme was a surprising 97 per cent. On the other hand, recipients of the stipend have not participated as extensively or performed as well as expected on examinations for senior secondary certificates.

Roughly 60 per cent took the exam and only a little more than half passed. (However, this is still marginally higher than nationwide rates in project areas). (Kane 2004: 123)

While the World Bank concluded that "all indicators are that a profound revolution has occurred in Bangladeshi society and that incentives to keep girls in school were a critical feature of that revolution" (Kane 2004: 123, quoting from World Bank PAD), they also found stipends to be expensive, representing over 13 per cent of the budget for secondary education. In addition, they did not know if girls' participation in the FSSAP, or their families' participation, would result in altering cultural norms about girls and education once stipends are withdrawn.

Misallocation of funds and the quality of education in target schools are other problems (Miske, Moore, and DeJaeghere 2000). These challenges are shared by other stipend programmes (Kane 2004: 123). Rugh (2000) discusses the same types of challenges, and finds that there can also be complaints from boys and girls who are excluded from the programmes. Overall, however, the results look promising. Sustainability and influence beyond the individual students are areas where further work is warranted. A more nuanced analysis of cultural beliefs and practices would reveal potential for deeper and more enduring processes or types of change that would alter the conditions from which gender parity arises.

Conditional cash transfers are another strategy similar to scholarships, the difference being that payments are made to families with the condition that they not only further their education, but also attend to medical needs (e.g., have periodic examinations and receive treatment when needed) and receive immunizations. In this way, public health concerns and educational goals are addressed and mutually supportive. This type of approach is being tried in Brazil and Colombia with support from the World Bank. School

attendance, performance, and receiving vaccinations are conditions on which cash is transferred to families. Conditions such as these are relatively easy to monitor.

4.1.3 Subsidies, grants, and in-kind provisions

Indirect, hidden, and opportunity costs are not commonly addressed through scholarship programmes, but require *subsidies or capitation grants* to offset costs of the poorest families.

The benefits to families of girls' labour in the home and community are lost when they are in school. "[U]ntil recently, indirect costs were not clearly delineated, and opportunity costs of children's labor, particularly of non-wage labor of the sort provided by girls, were rarely taken into account ..., except to note that poor attendance, retention and even achievement, particularly for girls, were the result of children being required to work" (Kane 2004: 124). In Ghanaian families with children under six years of age, the likelihood increased of older girls working and not attending school (Canagarajah and Coulombe 1997, cited by Kane 2004: 124). Opportunity costs are often somewhat distinct for boys and for girls. For boys, this means lost income for any income-generation work they do, and less labour in fields where subsistence agriculture is practiced. For girls, in addition to these types of lost labour, they are often expected to take care of siblings and do household tasks, thus freeing adults up for income-generating activities. Therefore, the loss to a family of girls' labour can be more critical. Hence, strategies to offset the opportunity costs must take these local patterns and concerns into account.

In addition to payments, *in-kind provisions* are a useful strategy, as with providing food during the school day as an incentive to send children to school. Where girls are traditionally involved in subsistence agriculture and their labour is necessary to family survival, providing staples (rice, sugar, etc.) is one strategy. In some areas, these are given directly to the girls, and they are then able to negotiate their schooling from a place of increased strength. Finding meaningful ways to reduce the cost for families of feeding girls – particularly when they are not earning money because they are in school instead of working in the field, taking care of children, or otherwise contributing to family and community life – is necessary especially where these responsibilities are important for family survival.

Grants paid directly to girls' schools, or to co-ed schools to ensure places for girls in school, is a strategy. Tanzania has experimented with this type of approach. Mexico's PROGRESA programme provides money and in-kind benefits to the rural poor on condition of regular attendance. Enrolment increased significantly, particularly for girls, and mostly at the secondary level, but it did not seem to affect achievement (Kane 2004: 124, citing others). In Kenya, "price reductions for out-of-home care had a 'substantial impact on enrolment rates of 8-to-16-year-old girls' [but]

had no effect on boys" (Kane 2004: 124, quoting Lokshin, Glinskaya and Garcia 2000).

4.1.4 Supplemental programmes

Programmes to reduce girls' childcare responsibilities include *sibling day-care* programmes in schools in Bangladesh, *pre-school programmes* in Nepal, and similar initiatives within BRAC in Bangladesh, the *Escuela Nueva* in Colombia, and UNICEF-supported schools in Egypt (Kane 2004: 125). Day-care provisions should accommodate both girls' siblings (when they are the caregivers), and, for adolescent mothers, their own children. When children under the age of two are excluded, however, the heaviest responsibility of older girls is not alleviated (Rugh 2000: 73; Kane 2004: 125). Supportive services such as day care and preschool can enable older girls not only to attend school, but also to participate in apprenticeship opportunities, work, and other necessary life activities.

Finally, *flexible school schedules* have helped older girls in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Senegal, and Colombia. While some of these programmes have focused on primary school girls, the work responsibility of post-primary girls will only be greater. To be effective, incentives need to meet all education-related costs for the very poor, including gender-specific costs. Research is needed to recognize more fully the range of opportunity costs to parents, including those related to both paid and unpaid work.

4.1.5 Vouchers

Vouchers and other types of "choice" initiatives are intended to create a market competition whereby families and students would make choices to attend particular schools based on their preferences, and vouchers would enable those choices. Voucher programmes are not usually designed to address gender parity or the gender gap directly. They rely on market mechanisms and assume that with this competition for students, schools will improve on their own. In Colombia, there was "a statistically significant increase in the number of years of school completed by girls" following implementation of a voucher scheme (Kane 2004: 123, citing World Bank 2001b).

We must ask, however, who these girls were, and whether there were other girls, in turn, who were disadvantaged by the voucher scheme. Many voucher programmes find a widening of the economic gap, with the most geographically remote and/or the poorest families being excluded because of the hidden



costs of participating, or because of the absence of schools from which to choose in certain regions or neighbourhoods. Because voucher schemes are not designed for gender equity, but as decentralization policies that stimulate market competition, any gains in gender parity or reduction of the gender gap should be closely examined in relation to other issues of equity. (The underlying agendas driving these types of programmes are not equity, empowerment, or human rights agendas, but, instead, are neoliberal economic policy agendas. As such, they assume that “all boats rise” and, eventually, everyone will be benefited. Instead, we have seen a deepening of poverty in many places.)

4.1.6 Income-generation incentives

In areas where completion of secondary school does not enhance one's earning capacity, there is little incentive to complete school. More research is needed in order to understand better the contextualized relationship between income-generating possibilities and formal schooling and also alternative educational options, particularly as these affect girls. This research should include recognition of paid employment, entrepreneurial activities, and informal sector work. In what types of work or income generating activities do girls engage who have completed secondary school, vocational-technical education or income-generation programmes? What about those who have dropped out? What is their earning capacity? How do various educational models relate to current and projected local economic opportunities for male and female youth? These questions need to be contextualized not only at the country level, but at more localized settings and relative to particular groups (religious, ethnic, cultural, etc.) within countries. How does

post-primary education of girls affect their earning capacity? How does – or how could – the curriculum address these concerns?

4.2 Facilities and materials

Schools buildings, facilities such as toilets, desks, and water, and materials within classrooms all affect the access youth have to schools, and the quality of the educational experiences. Many of these components affect girls and boys differently.

4.2.1 School buildings and spaces in schools

As more and more children complete primary school, many countries are facing a major challenge because sufficient spaces in existing secondary schools are sorely lacking. The primary issue regarding facilities relates to the shortage of actual school buildings and school spaces to accommodate the demand. As universal primary education (UPE) is achieved, primary school leavers are creating a swell in the demand for post-primary opportunities. This is often exacerbated by the already limited numbers of schools in rural and underserved areas. While UNICEF does not include the construction of schools in its priorities, initiatives such as *Schools for Africa* does. The work of philanthropists in this initiative in six countries balances UNICEF's priorities for what goes on inside the schools. Child-Friendly Schools, for example, intends to provide a more hospitable space for girls and boys to engage more deeply in learning processes.

4.2.2 Facilities

Beyond the actual school buildings, there are also shortages of teachers (discussed below), materials, and basic facilities at schools. Toilets, running water, and private spaces for post-primary-aged girls are critical. Where such facilities are lacking, enrolment and attendance is negatively affected. In many villages girls do not attend school during their monthly cycles.

4.2.3 Classroom materials: Quantity and quality

Additionally, quality of materials is a high priority, not only regarding academic content, but also in terms of the images and values that are portrayed. Stereotyped images should be removed so that they do not encourage gender

bias and discourage girls from staying in school or from pursuing certain non-traditional careers.

4.3 Alternative school structures

Beyond the need for more schools, four types of alternative school structures are named in numerous studies as possible strategies to serve girls better in secondary schools: Community schools, boarding schools, single-sex schools, and distance education. In addition, alternative or nonformal education programmes have been established as a parallel system to formal schooling that is more successful in accommodating some students, often including girls. Finally, social spaces of other types are also useful for adolescent girls in their social development.

4.3.1 Nonformal education

Providing nonformal alternatives is a strategy found to be the most commonly used “to improve access, persistence and achievement (as opposed to teacher, curriculum or community-based interventions)” and one that is frequently reported to be successful in meeting these goals (Kane 2004: 120, citing Kane and Yoder 1998). BRAC’s educational programmes are well-known examples. Beyond their nonformal primary education programme (NFPE), two programmes in particular focus on post-primary ages: BRAC’s PACE programme focuses on post-primary basic education, and the Adolescent Development Programme (ADP) focuses on adolescent development through life skills development. Both programmes concentrate not primarily on girls but on all adolescents, with a focus on those “left out” of formal education (BRAC no date-b). Indeed, many successful approaches seem to be focused on a variety of marginalized or vulnerable groups, within which girls are often (but not always) prominent.

ActionAid Kenya (AAK) conducts evening and after work classes, initially intended for older children of both sexes (Elimu Yetu Coalition 2005). They realized, however, that many girls were left at home during periods of drought to care for weakened animals and boys were sent far from home in search of pasture-land. AAK, then, along with the government, established out-of school centres for the girls. Oxfam GB has created several mobile school projects for children of nomadic pastoralists.

Alternative programmes such as these usually combine several individual strategies in ways that “consider local poverty, scheduling, childcare issues and cultural concerns over girls’ honor and safety” (Kane 2004: 8). In line with the argument for integrated approaches to issues, Kane states,

it is worth noting that the success of many alternative and non-formal programmes lies not only in their cultural relevance, but also in the fact that they have, in effect, created a microcosm of a healthy, comprehensive support system. It is perhaps this aspect of alternative programmes, rather than their individual strategies, that warrants further study. (Kane 2004: 13)

4.3.2 Community schools

A number of NGOs and countries have had experience with community schools. Generally, governments provide teachers and the communities provide the land on which to build a school, the labour to build it, and the commitment to be involved in the ongoing management of the school. Many community school programmes require a certain percentage of girls to be enrolled – often more than 50 per cent – in order to improve gender parity and decrease the gender gap.

4.3.3 Boarding schools and mobile schools

Nomadic populations, especially girls in nomadic societies, are among those with the lowest educational participation rates – 9 per cent in some areas (Oxfam 2005a). Kenya and Eritrea have experimented with boarding schools, and Sudan and Mongolia have some mobile schools (Oxfam 2005a). In Kenya, most of the out-of-school children are nomadic pastoralists in the northeast where the following circumstances obtain:

... about one in four children attends school and gender disparities are great, with fewer than one in five girls enrolled. To reach these students, the government, together with UNICEF and other donors, is experimenting with a range of innovative but costly projects. These include mobile classrooms, greater numbers of boarding schools and feeding schemes, and outreach to parents and community leaders about the importance of providing their children – particularly their daughters – with a formal education. (Fleshman 2005: 10)

In one boarding school in Kenya, girls receive priorities, and this has increased their enrolment:

Enrolment has also shot up where strategies are in place to make schools safer and healthier for girls. At Lokichoggio Mixed Primary School, the only boarding school in the area, girls are first to receive mattresses, beds, and mosquito nets – a policy that has resulted in a rapid increase in girls' enrolment. (UNICEF 2005b)

Research on boarding and mobile schools is sparse, and we need to know much more about what motivations and concerns nomadic families have regarding the education of their daughters. Furthermore, almost nothing is written about boarding and mobile schools in relation to post-primary-age girls. One area of concern that is documented (to a limited degree) relates to a family concern that formal schooling undermines local cultural values and practices. A whole range of policy challenges is specific to mobile and boarding schools:

To be successful, mobile schools need to challenge well-established ideas of what a school is; mobility may necessitate a shortened school day, involve multigrade teaching (sometimes including adults too), require a truncated school year, and need an adapted curriculum which requires specific relevant training for teachers. In all schools in pastoralist areas, payment of teachers' salaries can be a problem if the government does not have a flexible payment scheme, or has devolved responsibility for payment to local government offices without an adequate budget, or if the community must carry the burden. (Oxfam 2005a: 6)

Often, mobile schools serve pupils in the earliest grades only. For example, in Darfur, Sudan, Oxfam's mobile school was a one-teacher multigrade school that travelled with families in small groups. The government approved mobile schooling only for the first four years of basic education. This limited duration disadvantages children and youth who are not afforded other modes of schooling with less familial supervision, primarily girls.

As complete primary schools (i.e., schools offering all six primary grades) are available only in permanent settlements, few nomadic children continue their education for more than four years. This is especially the case for the girls, who are less likely than boys to go on to boarding school or to a static school in a settlement. This raises the question of what results can be achieved in these first four years, and to what extent girls have acquired sustainable skills and developed the expertise that they need for their futures. (Oxfam 2005a: 7)

These school strategies may serve only as temporary solutions for some groups; they do not address some of the underlying concerns: The lack of permanent school buildings in remote regions, quality concerns, and cultural incongruities between communities and school policy. In examining educational strategies to serve mobile populations, Kratli argues that:

... these alternative approaches do not address the structural inadequacy of education systems. They are often about getting beneficiaries "hooked" to "fit the system," and are but a parallel second-class education. Unless the power issue behind the formal/non-formal divide is addressed, even the best education programmes may only result into channelling out-of-school children into persistently unresponsive systems. (Kratli 2000)

4.3.4 Single-sex schools

While most of the existing research on same-sex schooling pertains to elite schools in industrialized countries, we might assume that some of the strengths may carry over to schools in less industrialized areas. When done well, these schools provide safe spaces within which girls can learn without distractions from boys, become empowered, and learn leadership skills. Another glimpse into this possibility is to examine some of the women's literacy initiatives. They too often provide women-only social spaces in which women can not only learn literacy, but also develop networks, learn from each other, mobilize for mutual support, and share experiences about schooling their children. (Stromquist 1997). Women-only spaces for learning can enable more freedom of involvement and more of a sense of ownership of the programme.

Anecdotal evidence already exists, such as comes from a girls' secondary school in a relatively poor urban area of Nairobi where the adolescents have made impressive strides. Nearly all of the students qualified for the university on the basis of exam scores, to the surprise of all. The principal had recently transferred from a prestigious school and had focused on mathematics and physics and selected skilled and knowledgeable teachers. He observed, "The only reason girls do not perform well in sciences is because they have not been encouraged and been made to believe in themselves ... and in some cases they also lack role models" (Kamotho 2002, as cited by Miske 2005: 43).

Interestingly, in the U.S., single-sex academies for boys of colour are being promoted as a structure that would provide this

same type of group-relevant space to marginalized and struggling youth in secondary schools, particularly African American youth. More research is needed in order to understand fully whether and how boarding schools and/or single-sex schools influence gender parity, the gender gap, and gender equity. Do they enable empowerment through good quality education that challenges gender bias, or do they perpetuate marginalization through a second-rate education and promotion of low social status for girls?

Girls-only schools have been suggested as a strategy to provide a protected or safe environment for girls in which they can more freely be themselves and learn. While single-sex schools accommodate family concerns about female purity and protection of girls, these particular concerns, while reflecting realities of gender-based violence and vulnerability, also reflect an internalized “ideology which considers boys and girls to have distinct natures” (Doggett 2005: 239). Boys (in India, in this example) are regarded as having “innate ill intentions,” and this requires restriction of girls’ mobility (p. 240). This ideological structure excuses men/boys from being accountable, and it places all of the responsibility on girls (240). In the schools studied by Doggett (2005: 240), girls learned their gender-based roles. Gender ideologies were not challenged. Awareness of some of these issues is mentioned, but students were not able to negotiate a space in the outside world. However, the school did offer a space for girls to be themselves, and this seemed to increase retention and participation.

Despite the foregoing critique, same-sex schooling might be a very appropriate and safe short-term option for the post-primary education of girls in many regions. This is especially true in areas where violence against women is prevalent and where girls’ security is routinely threatened either within the classroom or in the wider community, and where cultural or religious beliefs require separation of boys and girls.

4.3.5 Technology and distance education

Distance education is intended to expand access to education, particularly where schools do not exist, or where groups of children or youth do not attend school because of schools’ inability to address concerns of safety or cultural priorities for gender segregation. Smaller groups, in more private locations, can

access instruction and content via technologies such as radio, television, and computers. Zambia’s Interactive Radio Initiative (IRI) provides basic education, using a community facilitator in place of a teacher, to facilitate the radio lessons with groups of children. Although the focus of IRI is primary education, older children and youth can also be involved, as they are in the *Educadores* programme of Honduras. This alternative delivery system involves text, audio learning materials, and volunteer facilitators who work in any available setting near the home or the workplace. Ethiopia is also known for the use of radio and television (“plasma”) in providing basic education. At the secondary level, Mexico’s *Telesecundarias* and India’s National Open School (NOS) are examples. *Telesecundarias* are lower secondary level schools that provide instruction via television to geographically remote communities. South Africa’s distance education approach is also a model to watch. While strides have been made in improving school buildings and teachers for primary students, there is still a long way to go at the post-primary level. Because girls are more often not sent to school after the primary level if adequate facilities do not exist, distance education is one way to include girls in educational experiences when adequate facilities for face-to-face learning are not available.

For distance and technology-based education to be a viable option, a community needs to have access to the forms of technology and equipment necessary for the transmission of the educational content. Since such resources are frequently limited in rural or impoverished areas, it may not be possible for this strategy to be employed equitably. Additionally, it would also be useful to see if there are any gender differences in access or patterns of engagement in distance education. Incorporation of distance learning should be gender equitable.

4.3.6 Girls’ social spaces

Studies on women and nonformal education increasingly find that a space in which women can gather for social purposes is helpful in building community, nurturing mutual support structures, and sharing knowledge informally (Monkman 1998; Stromquist 1997). Such a space, while not intended primarily as an educational space, enables informal learning in ways in which women are more actively engaged in negotiating the learning processes.

This is space in which agency can emerge. Social spaces are not very evident in the literature about girls and young women, although there are some indications. The Nike Foundation, for example, gave BRAC US\$600,000 to start “safe spaces” where adolescent girls “can make friends, read books, play musical instruments, and learn how to earn and handle money” (Davis 2006). BRAC had begun their ADP by creating “reading centres” in which adolescent girls who were not able to continue their education could meet informally, read so as not to lose their recently developed literacy, and engage in other types of interactions. The ADP now has a broader focus: they aim (among other things) to provide a space in which girls can socialize and “secure empowering networking opportunities for adolescent girls.” (BRAC no date-a)

In addition, BRAC’s ADP aims to “provide education in areas such as life-skills, gendered roles, child marriage, sexual abuse, HIV/AIDS” for both adolescent boys and girls. BRAC’s focus has expanded to include boys in a strategy to focus on gender relations:

Boys are being included in our programme because we have realized that ultimately, they are the ones who are going to be the husbands and fathers of the near future, and decision-making at the family level will, to a large extent, depend on them. We have realized that ultimately, a programme like this needs equal saturation across genders, and support from males is needed to be able to make a lasting impression on wider society. There is little point in giving awareness to adolescent girls about their rights, reproductive health, and other critical issues that directly affect their lives without reaching out to boys and making them aware of their responsibilities. (BRAC no date-a).

4.3.7 Cluster approaches and full-service schools

Collective support for schools can take a number of different forms. Kenya has experimented with an approach where strong schools support the development of weaker schools that are geographically located (“clustered”) nearby. Similarly, in the U.S. some school districts are organizing “families” of schools that work together to create strong educational experiences for children from kindergarten through grade 12. These tend to be several primary schools whose graduates attend one or two middle schools and one high school. Singapore has developed a structure with a centralized science education centre that serves several nearby schools. Clustering

resources in ways that serve multiple schools, or coordinating work across schools, are two strategies that avoid duplication of services while using resources for the advantage of more than one school. Of course, close proximity of multiple sites is a prerequisite.

Full-service schools in the U.S. incorporate social services with educational services in one setting. Having a health clinic, day care centre, and school in one location can help adolescent parents or students who care for younger siblings fulfil their responsibilities for childcare and/or attend to their own or their family’s medical needs while also attending school. This approach can also include educational settings beyond formal schools: apprenticeships, work training, nonformal education centres, and the like.

4.4 Curricular and programmatic structures

While there are potentially many curricular areas where strategies might be useful, we focus on four: technical education, child-friendly education, life skills education, and social change or transformative education.

4.4.1 Skills development, vocational, and technical education

Schooling as preparation for work has been a focus of interest all over the world. For girls, concerns range from increasing the percentage of girls/women in engineering and computer science programmes, to the gender patterns in the digital divide, to ensuring that girls do not fall behind in maths and science in middle and secondary schools. South African high schools target girls for science and technology courses. The Female Education in Maths and Science project (FEMSA) has tried for over a decade, across Africa, to improve participation and performance of girls in science, mathematics, and technology (SMT) at primary and secondary levels.

Lauglo (2004) analyses vocationalized secondary education in Ghana, Botswana, and Kenya, finding gender biases in vocational enrolment. Boys gravitate towards building and construction and mechanical courses, while all but avoiding the home economics courses. In Kenya, however, computer courses are fairly balanced with male and female enrolments,

Box B. Case study: Alternative school structure strategies

India's National Open School (NOS)

The Open School Project (OSP) began in 1979 to address the shortcomings of the formal secondary education system in India. Despite constitutional provisions for free and compulsory education until age 14, education “could not reach the poor and disadvantaged” (Sujatha 2002: 14) due to the sheer size of India’s population, social and regional disparities, abject poverty, lack of sufficiently trained teachers, and actual school buildings. Less than 30 per cent of secondary age students are in secondary schools, and the quality of that education remains problematic. OSP enrolment increased from 1,672 in 1981 to over 40,000 in 1989. The OSP led to the establishment of the National Open School (NOS) in 1989, in order for “the over-aged, rejected, reluctant, or interested yet bereft of facilities, to enrol and learn.” The target population of the NOS includes school dropouts and such marginalized groups as rural youth, urban poor, girls and women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the disabled, and former soldiers.

The main objectives of the NOS are as follows:

- to provide educational opportunities to interested learners through courses and programmes of general education, life-enrichment modules, and vocational courses up to pre-degree level;
- to serve as an agency for effective dissemination of information related to distance education and open learning, and,
- to identify and promote standards of learning in the distance education system and to maintain standards of equivalence with the formal system.

The NOS was established as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Human Resource Development and in 1990 authorized by the Government of India to act as the certifying authority at the secondary and senior secondary levels. This was an important and radical step towards “unshackling distance education from the folds of the formal system and infusing flexibility, relevance, quality, and credibility in distance education as an alternative system.” Equally important is the fact that the Open School secondary certificate is recognized by the Council of Boards of Secondary Education (CBSE) as equivalent to other CBSE secondary certificates offered to formal students, allowing students who pass an Open School secondary course to enter the senior secondary level in any formal school. Finally, the certificates awarded by the NOS to its students after qualifying in secondary and senior secondary examinations have been recognized by various universities and boards as sufficient for admission into higher education courses offered or overseen by those institutions.

In its current form, the NOS offers three levels of academic courses and three other programs. Academic courses include the (a) Foundation or Bridge Certificate Course (roughly the equivalent of eight years of primary education, but for those 14 years and over), (b) Secondary Certificate Course (equivalent to the ninth and tenth year of schooling, for those over 15), (c) Senior Secondary Certificate Course (the last two years of secondary school for those who have passed the X standard examination). Unlike the formal system, those in the Senior Secondary Certificate Course do not have to choose between science or humanities tracks. In the Secondary Certificate Course, instruction is available in English, Hindi, Bengali, Urdu, Telugu, and Marathi. Vocational subjects with academic ones can be included in both secondary courses. Besides these three academic courses, there are three others: (a) the Vocational Education Programme, (b) Life Enrichment and Continuing Education Courses (particularly for teachers, principals, executives, and the general public), and (c) Open Basic Education (still in the planning

Continued

Box B, continued

stage, aims to be a second chance to out-of-school children younger than 14 years of age, and adults who have completed elementary education).

A decentralized network of study centres (Accredited Institutions for Academic Subjects, and Accredited Vocational Institutions) use space in formal schools and also in NGOs outside of their regular hours of operation. This decreases their overhead costs, allows for consistency between the formal and nonformal systems, and promotes the visibility of the NOS as a second-chance option for those falling through the cracks in the formal system. The curriculum is academically rigorous, yet it places a heavy emphasis on relevance to students' lives and on practical and applied aspects of content. Other distinctive features include high-quality, user-friendly self-instruction materials. Some formal schools use their materials for remedial programmes. NOS also offers regular meetings at the study centres as a way to enhance students' self-learning, skills and motivation; to provide guidance and feedback; and to create opportunities for peer interaction. There is some flexibility in charting an individual course and pace of study and in sitting for examinations. Finally, NOS credits transfer to and from the formal school system. Interestingly, while the ease of credit transfer has helped for seamless movement between the nonformal and formal systems, it is feared that the NOS might become an "easy way" to complete secondary school, particularly for those who fail in the formal system. How will this affect access for those not in the formal system?

While there are costs for courses, discounts are available for women and marginalized groups. The original government subsidies have stopped, and the NOS is now self-supporting. However, this creates a paradox. While making the programme self-sustaining, it does create hardships for the poorest, as courses are still out of reach for some. In contrast, formal education is free to the underprivileged, including girls. Access to government funding could provide resources to fully support these groups and provide them with a truly alternative system of education.

Although girls' participation in absolute numbers has grown to nearly one-third of the students at the secondary levels (only slightly less than in formal schools), gender equality remains an elusive goal. Fees remain high for some girls. However, girls from Scheduled Tribes (certain indigenous minority groups in India) enrol at higher rates in NOS than in the formal system. While the strengths of the programme are notable, formal programme evaluation and research would be helpful in understanding how effective NOS is in achieving its goal of "universalization of education, enhancing social equity and justice and creating a learning society."



perhaps because this is a prerequisite for secretarial courses, thus increasing girls' enrolments (Lauglo 2004: 18). In the country case studies on which Lauglo's study is based, no effort was found to mitigate gender-biased enrolment patterns. This stands in contrast to the FEMSA project and to the efforts of the school principal in the urban girls' secondary school in Kenya cited above in the discussion of single-sex schools. Strategy decisions might focus on choices between stand-alone programmes and those that are infused into the secondary system.

In addition to formal schooling, nonformal programmes seek to strengthen the skills and knowledge that youth can use for vocational purposes. Junior Achievement, for example, is

an organization that helps students to develop business skills. It began in the U.S. in 1919 and now works in many countries. Botswana, for example, has programmes that work with primary and secondary schools both within school programmes and after school programmes, reaching over 15,000 students. While gender concerns are not evident on the website of Junior Achievement, initiatives such as these would do well to use gender analysis tools to gauge the effects on both women and men, and consider the emancipatory capacity of the approach. Scholarship on gender and income-generation projects, for example, tells us that what women learn to do vocationally needs to be understood in context. Gender relations, gendered economic opportunities,

discursive ideological assumptions embedded in programming, and the like are critical if we hope to support girls and women in their quest for productive, meaningful, and sustained engagement in income-generation activities.

4.4.2 Girl-friendly and youth-friendly schools

Schools that are safe are welcoming places where students more easily engage in learning. Beyond the issues of safety discussed earlier, efforts can be made to train teachers to design teaching strategies built on social relations with the pupils that encourage a desire to learn, and willing engagement in learning processes. Issues would be similar to those discussed in initiatives for “child-friendly schools” but adapted for older children and taking account of particular needs of girls and boys of post-primary age. These needs may include sibling care, work outside the home, and help with family agricultural activities. Girl-friendly schools “ensure that girls have equal access to education, school calendars and schedules [that] accommodate girls’ household responsibilities, [as well as] teaching materials [that] promote gender equity, and the like (Wellesley and DTS 2003: 25).

One critical issue concerning some post-primary-aged girls relates to school policies regarding pregnancy and motherhood. Some countries prohibit pregnant girls or mothers from attending school; others have recently enacted policies for readmission after birth or for continuous enrolment during this period. Chilisa (2002) examines a variety of policies regarding pregnancy and education and finds three basic approaches: those that expel pregnant girls, those that provide for re-entry after birth, and those that enable pregnant girls and young mothers to continue in school during these periods. Expulsion policies, she argues, are a form of gender violence, and re-entry policies, while positive in some ways, continue to violate girls’ rights to education during the period when enrolment is not allowed. Gender inequalities often remain, despite these policies, since re-entry is often difficult because of local and institutionalized ideological beliefs (e.g., where motherhood and schooling are not congruent or where attitudes towards young mothers are not welcoming in school).

Moreover, boys who are fathers often are not expected to interrupt their educational lives for fatherhood. Chilisa’s (2002) study, funded by FAWE, finds that of the ESAR countries named, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zanzibar expel pregnant girls, while Botswana, Kenya,

Malawi, Zambia, and South Africa have re-entry policies. Continuation policies that allow for uninterrupted schooling are in place in Madagascar and Namibia. Only these two countries, Chilisa argues, challenge gender relations that disadvantage girls and women.



4.4.3 Life skills education

Life skills education is promoted in systems that encourage a blending of academic and life-relevant goals. Historically, girls were educated in the “domestic sciences” because their roles were thought to be limited primarily to working (without wages) in the home. The newer life skills focus pertains to both boys and girls, and it is designed to support the realities of life. It is understood that there are life concerns that everyone can benefit from learning more about. Health concerns (particularly HIV/AIDS), conflict resolution, family planning, domestic violence, and drug use/abuse are some examples.

Life skills education initiatives include a variety of approaches that encompass human rights education, as described above, in addition to the areas of focus that have received increased attention in primary school, such as assertiveness training, decision making, and leadership skills. Traditional forms of cultural transmission might also be considered. Parenting education, childcare, and cooking are traditionally learned in household settings by older, more experienced community members. For example, Vavrus (2003), in her ethnographic study of schooling and HIV/AIDS in Tanzania, quotes at length from a community member who recognizes the importance of the informal traditional cultural education provided by older women, through which they taught girls about what was expected of them as women, including how to avoid sexual advances, and how to space pregnancies (p. 67). Because these traditional informal education cultural

practices have been disrupted, many life skills are no longer learned. Birth spacing, for example, was no longer practiced unless it was with birth control pills. Vavrus discusses “whose” version of culture drives informal education, and how conflicting views of culture – and therefore of what should be taught – are the reality. Local members of the community where she conducted her research felt that foreign influences had upset some of the community’s ability to influence younger generations. “... the frequent rhetorical connections between foreign influence and immorality and condoms and HIV/AIDS suggest that these are important, interrelated cultural concerns for many in the community” (Vavrus 2003: 68). In addition, in communities where war or the HIV/AIDS epidemic has upset traditional relationships between older generations and younger ones, other approaches to teaching life knowledge and skills must be considered.

Thorpe (2005) examines HIV education in relation to a gender equality model in South Africa and Mozambique secondary schools where Augusto Boal’s drama/empowerment approach was used. Through team work involving an HIV trainer, people in the drama centre, students, and others, used a workshop format (i.e., discussions, not didactic instruction) with the aim of developing a climate of gender equality to explore issues of sexuality, gender, and power.

4.4.4 Transformative education for social change

Similar in some ways to life skills education, “transformative learning” approaches are interested in promoting social change. Learning is for the benefit of the group or community, not merely an individual achievement.

Transformative education methodologies are often influenced by Paulo Freire’s work, wherein participants critically examine their worlds, identify issues of concern, and plan strategies for social change. Learning occurs in the service of broader goals along the way. While traditionally many of these programmes are aimed at adults, increasing numbers of projects also involve youth, particularly in areas where there are many urban, out-of-work young people. Empowerment and community development are the end products of such an approach.

These can be programmes for out-of-school individuals, and are not typically designed as a parallel system as nonformal education

sometimes is; instead of “achievement” being the goal, transformative approaches have the explicit intent of effecting social change. Even though some of the curriculum can be life-skills oriented, more of a focus is on grassroots social change, including women’s and girls’ active participation. Programmes that include a gender focus tend to recognize patriarchy as a key social dynamic and one at the centre of learning and praxis. Some programmes with gender interests may include all female participants; others will be mixed. The mixed groups tend to recognize that gender relations involve both men and women, so both must be involved in reshaping gendered social conventions. Programmes of this type focus on a wide variety of issues and concerns, from the environment, to literacy, community development, and health. Tostan is an example of this type of programme (Box C).

4.5 Teachers

Some areas simply do not have enough teachers; in other places, where cultural preferences do not welcome male teachers of girls, women teachers are needed. In addition to the numbers of teachers, attention also needs to be paid to the quality of teacher preparation and practice. Furthermore, including gender awareness in teacher training programmes (Oxfam 2005b) is necessary if we expect teachers to challenge gender bias in their schools.

4.5.1 The teacher pipeline

The shortage of teachers cannot be addressed merely by training more teachers. Other educational sectors affect the availability of prospective teachers. As countries approach universal primary education, more teachers are needed to teach the quickly expanding primary school populations. Unless secondary school is expanded exponentially, not enough secondary school leavers will be available to choose teaching as a career, thus severely limiting the teacher supply. Similarly, in areas where women teachers are required for girls’

Unless secondary school is expanded exponentially, not enough secondary school leavers will be available to choose teaching as a career, thus, severely limiting the teacher supply.

enrolments in schools, unless more girls also complete secondary school and become trained as teachers, the shortages of women teachers will be severe. This is a pipeline issue: it requires attention at all levels of education. Strategies, then, would focus on increasing access and quality at pre-primary, primary, and post-primary levels, in addition to teacher education institutions and programmes. These might include incentives for girls intending to become teachers, or creating multiple avenues through which teachers are educated.

4.5.2 Alternative teacher education

In areas of severe teacher shortages, particularly in rural or remote areas where many (often urban) teachers will not work, strategies are needed to get and keep teachers. BRAC's nonformal education programme offers a model that addresses this shortage of women teachers, as well as the reluctance of more educated teachers, who are generally from urban environments, to relocate to rural communities. They recruit prospective teachers locally in rural communities and train them in collectively organized, periodic meetings throughout the school year. Because the teachers are from the community, they tend to remain in their teaching positions. The ongoing training sessions help to address problems as they arise, and provide consistency of support. Teachers rely on each other for collective support and are encouraged to promote the same reliance among their students. However, care must be taken not to create a second-class teaching force, where knowledge and skills are limited and inequitable educational outcomes are perpetuated.

4.5.3 Paraprofessionals

Using paraprofessionals is another strategy to increase the numbers of women in classrooms in order to encourage the enrolment of girls. These women, while not trained teachers, can assist the teachers, thereby providing more access to an adult in the classroom, and can act as a buffer where girls are being taught by male teachers. At the primary level, GCE (2005: 50) discusses the use of paraprofessionals in Asia and francophone Africa. Their use presents the risk of creating a second tier of teaching personnel, thereby introducing issues of social status hierarchies that many people do not welcome. Implications at post-primary levels should be carefully considered. Although paraprofessionals at this level would be better educated than at the



primary level, social hierarchies are likely and should be considered in local sociocultural contexts. Because education policy is often driven by economic motivations, there may also be dangers of too much reliance on less trained paraprofessionals, thus limiting the learning of the students.

4.6 Safety

Concerns about safety for girls relates not only to the school environment, but also to travel to and from school, and to boarding arrangements. Girls can experience sexual harassment; rape; culturally improper exposure to male teachers and students (e.g., lack of privacy that can compromise family honour); pressure to trade sexual favours for grades, books or school supplies, academic support, or money; and emotional turmoil related to the multitude of mixed social messages about gender and sexual identity. Social protections have become integral to enabling enrolment of girls, and, thus, a necessary concern of schools.

Some strategies for addressing sexual harassment in the schools include ethics education for teachers, gaining teacher cooperation in changing sexually exploitative behaviours, and proposing research on the issue as the basis for further action. The South African Council for Educators has distributed a framework of professional ethics for teachers, calling upon educators to refrain from any form of sexual relationship with students or sexual harassment, physical or otherwise. The council announced that it intends to launch a national

Box C. Case study: Curricular/programmatic strategies

Tostan's Village Empowerment Programme

Tostan is a Senegalese NGO that over a 20-year period has developed a nonformal education curriculum designed to enable grassroots social change and transformative learning of issues related to community hygiene, women's reproductive health, and human rights. It began as an 18-month programme to promote literacy, but literacy is now in a follow-up programme, and the initial shorter programme has a more direct focus on health, rights, and social change. The curriculum has been tried in a number of countries beyond Senegal, including Mali, Sudan, and Burkina Faso. Participants in some countries are all women, including young mothers and out-of-school adolescents; in others men also participate alongside women.

Active learning is at the foundation of the programme; knowledge is presented, and participants examine and discuss their own knowledge, opinions, and experiences relative to the topic at hand. Apart from the educational engagement, participants are encouraged to form groups, identify community issues of concern, strategize possible solutions, and engage in actions designed to solve these community problems. Learning, then, is to support and inform social change processes. The framing of the curriculum around human rights and health concerns elicits discussion of community problems such as flies and trash, safe food supplies, access to condoms, domestic violence, education of daughters, and cultural practices such as female genital cutting (FGC).

Strengths of this approach include the following:

- Identification of problems and approaches to solving them are self-directed by the community, at a time after the NGO implementing the curriculum has finished its work and left the villages. Local women or mixed gender groups drive the agenda.
- Sensitive issues such as FGC are framed as cultural practices that people are free to abandon if they choose. Local cultural practices are valued by others; they are not labelled (as in some programmes) as evil practices, as this implicates those who practice them as evil (which puts them on the defensive and halts discussion and learning). The choice is not to abandon one's past life, but to make changes they decide to make.
- Gender relations are central to the discussions; stereotypical generalizations of "male" and "female" are avoided. As such, issues of gender equity are understood as embedded in socially constructed relations of power that are gendered. Similar to cultural practices such as FGC, gender relations are then understood to be voluntarily changeable. The focus on gender relations enables an understanding of the underlying logic for why things are as they are, so strategies can then focus on those underlying dynamics, which will change the causes of the situations. The notion of gender relations included patriarchy as manifested in family decision-making patterns, double standards of behaviour by gender, and the like; gender-power in gender relations is key.

In evaluating the programme, participants in Tostan's programme in Mali explained that their action groups initially chose "easy" issues to address, then, after they gained experience, focused on "hard" issues. In both Mali and the Sudan, initial choices for social action included trash collection, hygiene at the wells, and other community health concerns. Community health, while it is everyone's concern, often falls within the realm of women's responsibility in caring for family and managing community relations. "Harder" issues, tackled after about six months of experience with the "easy" issues, included domestic violence and discussions about FGC (often followed by decisions to abandon or alter the practice). The right to education was also a common theme, with many

Continued

Box C, continued

participants stating in the evaluation of this programme in Mali and Sudan that they would make sure their daughters attend school.

One challenge that was clear in the Tostan projects in Mali and Sudan relates to follow-up support. In both Mali and Sudan, communities wanted more support from the NGO after the programme had ended. Sometimes this involved gaining information about various issues or options. At other times, community groups needed access to funds to sustain their projects. For example, trash collection in many communities requires transportation, which is not readily available locally. In addition, several of the participating villages named literacy programmes as one of their priorities for future initiatives. Beyond requiring resources to bring in a literacy teacher, the fact that literacy was identified in the community action groups as a priority, indicates that support for it comes from the grassroots, as opposed to the top-down nature of some literacy initiatives elsewhere where buy-in and commitment may be limited.

Decisions about whether women should be the only participants or whether men should also participate should be made locally. Sometimes, with men present, women are less likely to participate actively, express themselves openly, or talk about taboo topics such as those related to sexuality. On the other hand, because gender relations involve both men and women, women alone cannot alter them, so men must come to understand the issues to the same degree so that they are also part of any solution strategies, but not so integral that they take control of the process. The people in each of the countries in which Tostan's curriculum was implemented made their own decisions about how to balance the need for men's involvement with the need for safe spaces in which women can openly participate.

Sources: Tostan, 2006; Easton, Monkman and Miles, 2003; Monkman, Miles and Easton, 2007.



investigation into the extent of sexual harassment and abuse of pupils by teachers. In Benin, a multifaceted approach to sexual harassment and exploitation focuses primarily on the creation of policies and institutional practices that address violence. It also seeks a coordinated effort of a number of actors (e.g., NGOs and others) and altering of the beliefs about gender-based violence (Wible 2004).

Wellesley and DTS's (2003) literature review on unsafe schools includes a wide range of recommendations and strategies. The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in Johannesburg works in schools to make them safe places. They used focus groups to study the situation and to provide advice, educational materials, and training for teachers and students. CAMA in Ghana raises awareness about legal rights and sexual abuse through their Human Rights Programme. A number of programmes that address issues related to youth gangs are noted in South Africa, Brazil, and Mexico. In the literature reviewed, the authors noticed the obvious absence of strategies to "raise the status of girls by making schools more girl friendly ... or decreasing women's economic vulnerability through income-generating activities" (Wellesley and

DTS 2003: 25). GCE (2005: 48) describes several initiatives in a primary school in Ethiopia where women teachers have begun to teach sex education and where a Girls' Club has been instrumental in a variety of situations. For example, a male 18-year-old student in grade four who raped a girl in grade three was reported by the Girls' Club and apprehended by the police; the girl was allowed to return to school after the Girls' Club met with her parents. The Girls' Club also intervened in a forced marriage, getting the young woman a divorce and enabling her to resume her studies

4.7 Community support and involvement

Despite commitments by individual countries and international aid agencies to expand girls' participation in and access to schooling, cultural conditions may have a greater influence in gender equity in education at all levels, especially when countries and aid agencies collaborate more closely with communities and families. Mothers, fathers, teachers, school administrators, village

heads, religious leaders, local NGOs, and community organizations all have some influence on who attends school and for how long, and how beliefs and local life conditions influence school experiences. For that reason, community involvement is necessary if local conditions are to influence gender patterns in schooling more equitably.

In examining the conditions under which many African girls live, one marvels at the fact that some do enter school, that some of the original group actually “survive” to the end of primary school, and that a select number of them actually attain secondary or tertiary levels of education. Those who are successful often cite the support of family members, especially their mothers, or other role models/mentors who are usually women. For this reason, one of the few relatively promising and credible strategies for addressing girls’ school participation is the encouragement of more women to become teachers. Unfortunately, this strategy is not always operationalized. (Benson 2002: 5¹)

Operating in many African countries, the Girls’ Education Movement is a grassroots initiative that promotes equality in education. In Botswana, the Girls/Boys’ Education Movement supports the “Telling the Story” project where young adults facilitate a process in which students talk confidentially about their the challenges and hopes and work on solutions. Girls meet with women who are role models. In Botswana, about 80 per cent of children are in school and slightly more girls than boys attend school. The HIV-positive rate, however, is over 37 per cent, creating a situation in which girls are often burdened with family responsibilities at very young ages. Through the stories, it is clear that despite high enrolment rates, girls bear much of the burden of HIV/AIDS, from caring for other children to being confronted with gender violence. A 20-year-old volunteer reports as follows:

When we speak with the students, many of them get really excited to speak their minds.... It helps girls, especially the ones who are abused. We are there to help them, and we never disclose their names. It’s great for them to be able to talk without fear of being questioned or punished. We are the voice for the voiceless! (UNGEI 2005a: 2)

Another form of community involvement is central to AED’s African Girls Scholarship Programme (UNGEI 2005b), wherein communities decide who will receive scholarships and other support. Community members also work with local organizations to

implement AED’s programme. The local organizations “work with the schools, teachers, and communities to facilitate an enabling environment for the girls to succeed” (p. 2). Respected women from the community who have some education and leadership skills mentor girls. In Ghana some mentors worked with parents to reduce girls’ responsibility for housework in order to make time for study. In addition, because girls were found to have very limited and vague notions of what they could do with their lives, AED is producing a calendar showing successful women in both urban and rural areas, and telling their stories. Local communities will choose these role models, whose stories will also become part of the school curriculum, where they will personally tell their life stories to give girls a more concrete sense of possibilities.

In Malawi, local women’s groups have been active in lobbying on behalf of girls’ education (GCE 2005: 51, citing Swainson et al. 1998: 35). The League of Malawi Women, for example, has influenced the gender advocates in the Ministries of Education and of Community Services. After discussing other similar initiatives in South Asia, GCE (2005) reports that an assessment of three sector-wide approaches (SWAs) suggests that increased collaboration with indigenous gender networks will strengthen gains in girls’ and young women’s education. Nelly Stromquist’s (2006) work also points to the important contributions of women-centred NGOs in sustainable and gender-equitable social change.

Active support of local community authority figures is often instrumental. Kane (2004: 96, citing World Bank 1999) discusses Guinea and Mauritania, where “religious leaders, as influential members of the community, were called on to help build public awareness of the importance of educating girls.” For example, the local religious leader in Maata Moulana, Mauritania, and his predecessor, had supported the development of nursery schools, in part to help mothers in their multiple roles, and has been actively supporting coordination of formal schooling systems with religious education, Kane states. Further,

the success of this community is also indicative of a simple fact: when the government gets the message across and local leaders, in this case religious leaders, support it, the community’s religious and cultural traditions can be used as building blocks in an open, participatory process.

In a very close-knit community, the support of community leaders operates as a moral seal

of approval that cannot help but encourage reluctant parents to send their children, particularly their daughters, to school. ...[this is an example] where religious leaders, as influential members of the community, were called on to help build public awareness of the importance of educating girls. The success of this strategy showed that gaining trust and support of prominent community members ought to be the starting point for any crusade to change negative attitudes towards girls' schooling. (2004: 96)

This approach, while necessary to validate initiatives in some situations, can be problematic. Where authority figures' support becomes too strong an urging, resentment and resistance of top-down processes can ensue. Finding a productive balance of support through collaborative, participatory initiatives is critical.

While some community involvement in education has been by default (i.e., governments have not fulfilled their obligations to educate their citizens) and sometimes inappropriate (Kane 2004: 104, citing World Bank 2001a), in other situations it has taken more dynamic and effective forms. Communities are too often co-opted for financial inputs (Kane 2004: 104). Conversely, Rugh and Bossert (1998) see an association of community involvement in education with increased enrolments (cited in Kane 2004: 104). The role of community involvement is varied; among the positive patterns that affect girls are the following:

- *Sensitizing the community, social marketing, and social mobilization:* As Kane points out, "addressing parental concerns about government, schooling and, in particular, girls' physical and cultural security in schooling may be an area in which community involvement is one of the few feasible strategies" (2004: 106).
- *Encouraging community contribution to school resources and facilities:* Construction, school maintenance, and fees are examples. In some areas, schools would collapse without this support. Although this benefits all children, the closer a school is located to girls' homes, the more likely it is that they would attend. So, it may be the most remote and rural communities, where schools are the least available, are those that provide access to girls in the most dramatic ways.
- *Engendering school management:* Where school management is sensitive to gender

needs, girls will feel more welcome. Community involvement in school management, where supportive of girls, can counter the sometimes hostile environments that girls encounter.

- *Engaging the community in contributions to the learning process:* Kane (2004: 104, citing Wolf, Kane, and Strickland 1997) found that this is the least likely form of community participation. This can be important, however, in making pedagogy, materials, and content relevant to local cultural beliefs and processes.
- *Applying participatory research approaches:* According to Kane, "the main value of such approaches has been in identifying and illustrating the issue of girls' workloads and in highlighting parental concerns over costs, curriculum content, the relevance of education to community life and employment, the hardship of traveling long distances to school and girls' safety" (p. 111).

In some ways these types of community involvement reflect a continuum, from *schooling's influence on communities*, to *the influence of communities on education*. Negotiating these relationships, and being cognizant of how power is inherent in the relationships among governments, donors, schools, NGOs, communities, parents, youth, and children is critical. If community participation is going to be active, intrinsically motivated, ongoing, and integral, the community and parents must be able to exert some influence and to develop their leadership abilities. Conversely, it has been recognized in some projects that community participation can also be used to support inequities instead of empowering the disenfranchised (Kane 2004: 111). Also, adolescents are old enough to become actively involved in participatory approaches. And if they are, their involvement may be a positive influence. *Voices of Young Kenyans* (Akunga 2004) and *Voices of Young Zimbabweans* (Tapela and Mareneke 2004) are two examples where dialogues with youth about gender, sexuality, and HIV/AIDS reveal a wealth of knowledge that is used to improve policies and programmes. Engaging those same youth in the solutions seems not to have been an intended element of those research studies, but it would move participation to another level.

4.8 The third way: Media and affordable ICT

The media are increasingly being used to convey new ideas, challenge stereotypes, dialogue about cultural and gender concerns, and serve as a mode of instruction. However, the use of media also has great potential for being abused. Outside opinion on education and outside agendas for the modernization of society can indoctrinate a population by providing one-sided, propagandized information through the media. Portrayal of ideas through media sources can give them undue authority among the least informed and least educated portions of the population. On the other hand, media also have the potential to cause resistance to the ideas being promoted if the population regards them as too far out of line with cultural values.

USAID's SAGE Project in El Salvador partnered with the media as a strategy for putting the issue of girls' education on the national agenda (Schumann no date). Through regular and repeated coverage in newspapers, children and adults were sensitized about the importance of supporting girls' education. Photo essays along with educational and didactic games were used. Although this was focused on younger girls and education, the same strategy may be useful for broadening the public discourse and national agenda to include post-primary-aged girls, and perhaps also for a gender perspective as opposed to focusing only



on girls. Radio and television would be useful for less literate communities.

A somewhat obvious (yet noteworthy) limitation of media as a post-primary education expansion strategy is lack of access to equipment. Does limited access for some prove to be ultimately detrimental to gender equity? A consequence of limited access to the media by the most marginalized people would be a privileging of certain voices (generally those with social power and economic wealth), thereby giving those with access additional advantages, and maintaining the marginalization of particular groups of people.

4.9 Cultural and ideological issues

Belief systems and attitudes are at the foundation of gender bias. While many strategies aim to alter cultural belief systems, attitudes, and practices in order to eliminate this bias, it is also important at the same time to be sensitive to local cultural beliefs and practices. Finding that balance and engaging women and girls – and also men and boys – in dialogue and in reflection on their own analysis of these issues should be central. This needs to be at the core of educational work if we hope to create gender-equitable educational experiences that will in turn promote gender parity, closing of the gender gap, gender equity, and a redefinition of gender relations in communities and societies. At the same time, this process must be driven by those within the particular cultures, and the change processes must work in relation to the cultural contexts. Change pushed by outsiders will not be deeply integrated into cultural dynamics and so will be superficial and not sustainable.

Recognizing the cultural nature of concerns and practices relating to education, to adolescence, and to gender is a prerequisite. Kane (2004: 134–6) suggests exploring the cultural costs of particular initiatives to families. Existing studies and project reports commonly talk about cultural issues that impede girls' enrolment, achievement, and gender parity. To recognize more fully the importance of culture, we must move towards a focus on gender and gender relations, since definitions of these are at the core of the issues with which we are concerned. Cultural preferences for particular forms of gender relations give rise to gender disparity in enrolment, attainment, or achievement.

At the same time, cultural rights must be recognized. Peoples should have a right to their own cultural beliefs and practices and should not be made to change them by outsiders. Notions of cultural rights and human rights can be at odds with each other, however (Kalev 2004). For example, cultural beliefs that maintain that girls' futures do not require extended formal education conflict with UN conventions of human rights that state that all children have a right to education. The case study of Tostan presented above in Box C reflects a potential conflict between cultural preferences for the practice of FGC, although FGC conflicts with women's rights as reflected in CEDAW or with other human rights that protect people from harm.

At the same time, gender relations, and the bias embedded in many social structures of gender relations, are cultural in nature, and as such are not easily changed. Deep and lasting cultural change relies on insiders making their own decisions about how they envision their lives. Again, Tostan is a good example of one way to engage in dialogue about cultural issues that does not create defensiveness but enables free choice by participants. Instead of FGC being labelled a barbaric practice, as it is in some FGC eradication projects, Tostan considers it a cultural practice, therefore people can make a choice about how it might be incorporated into their lives. People are not labelled "bad" because they practice it. (In some FGC projects people feel defensive of

their cultural choices; this creates resistance and makes cultural change impossible.)

Engaging in respectful dialogue, then, appears to be a key component when cultural and ideological concerns are involved. Kane (2004: 133) argues that instead of positioning culture as the problem, it should be seen as an opportunity. She discusses how development workers and researchers tend to see culture as an obstacle or barrier. The facts, on the other hand, convey a different perspective:

[Culture] is the dynamic "macro" medium in which change occurs. A society's culture helps shape its educational philosophy and is the basis for its ideas about desirable cognitive skills, appropriate teaching methods and the role played by the community in learning. Designers should identify and capitalize on these larger strengths to develop practical, sustainable interventions. There is no other option. (Kane 2004: 134)

Therefore, strategies for expanding post-primary education must recognize cultural values and practices. Proposed changes that violate or challenge cultural norms need to be initiated within communities themselves.

Chapter Notes

¹ This quote is from page 5 of the pre-publication final draft.

5

Post-Primary Policy Approaches



A number of specific policy approaches – sector-wide, flexible, seamless, country driven, packages of interventions – are discussed below. These are broader approaches than the strategies in the previous section, and, as such, would involve a concerted planning process involving governments, donor agencies, international organizations, and others.

5.1 Sector-wide and multi-sector approaches: Coordinated efforts

Sector-wide approaches (SWAp) are increasingly being used in basic education. Because of the complexity of issues involved in post-primary education and gender, this approach is also promising beyond basic education. When multiple components of a whole sector are involved, a more coordinated effort is possible.

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE 2005) suggests that:

[The] success [of SWAp] in promoting gender-equity goals could be greatly increased if donors made more active efforts to reach out to, consult, and support indigenous gender networks. Donors should “work on the assumption that gender equality is an inseparable part of the sustainable development agenda, which already has the support of many key players in education in the partner country; [and] ensure that support to ‘champions of reform’ extends to those ‘gender champions’.” (Norton et al. 2000: 15, cited by GCE 2005: 52)

UNGEI and FAWE represent two important examples of coordinated education sector work relating to gender. UNGEI is the UN flagship for EFA as it relates to girls’ education. In this capacity, UNGEI involves the other UN organizations in working towards gender parity and increasing the enrolment of girls in school in order to reach the EFA goals. Their advisory committee and partners include many donor agencies, NGOs, and multilateral organizations. FAWE supports and coordinates the work of women educationalists in Africa in doing research and advocating on behalf of girls and young women in relation to education. The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) is another example; they are a coalition of civil society organizations, NGOs, and unions that

“promotes education as a basic human right, and mobilizes public pressure on governments and the international community to fulfil their promises to provide free, compulsory public basic education for all people; in particular for children, women and all disadvantaged, deprived sections of society” (GCE no date).

While sector-wide approaches strengthen the coordination of work done in a particular sector across partners, multi-sector approaches strengthen the coordination across sectors and focus work on particular areas. For girls, it can be important to involve business, religious, health, and media sectors (among others) if we truly want to improve the lives of post-primary-aged girls/young women.

Williams (2001), in his study profiling multi-sector approaches in Guinea and Morocco, makes a number of important points. Forming partnerships requires that governments be willing to reach out to other sectors for support. When they do, new and important actors and institutions can become involved. Williams (2001) recognized a number of benefits:

- The importance of traditional and non-traditional partners is recognized.
- Solutions and programmes are locally designed.
- Multiple methods are used.
- Local resources (human, financial, physical resources) are developed.
- Capacity building (in leadership, technical and operational training) is supported for local institutions in their new roles of supporting girls' education.
- Engaging all stakeholders democratizes the civic, social, and economic opportunities for girls.

Tietjen (2000) examines the roles of the business, religious, and media sectors in policy advocacy, shaping of public opinion, and service provision primarily in girls' and basic education, but also in vocational training for girls and women. She finds that the business sector is primarily interested in quality issues, the religious sector on ensuring access to underserved children, and the media sector in providing services and technologies, such as distance learning or educational programming through a variety of communications technologies. The media sector is also involved in news coverage about education issues, including about girls.

Closely related to SWAPs and multi-sector approaches are sector-wide investment programmes. For example, Kenya has 23 investment programmes, including one in secondary education.

Medium-term expenditure frameworks (MTEFs) should not be ignored in considering these types of arrangements. Reconceptualizing education more broadly than formal schooling (primary, secondary, and tertiary) has implications for MTEFs and allocations to various sectors and budgetary categories. MTEFs should incorporate life skills education, nonformal education, vocational-technical education, and other forms that may not be embedded in formal schooling. Further, assumptions about the value and relations of formal schooling and alternative forms of education historically position formal schooling to receive most of the available funding. Reconceptualizing education at post-primary levels to be more inclusive will enable a revaluing of these other forms in relation to their importance both short-term (e.g., to serve those now excluded from formal schooling), and long-term (e.g., to address needs beyond those included in formal schooling). Technical-vocational education, nonformal education, and other forms of post-primary education, should be considered on a par with formal schooling, not marginal to it; all are necessary for increasing educational attainment, parity, equity, and quality.

Traditional visions that situate technical-vocational education as an alternative (second choice) to university or upper secondary school, or that assume that formal schooling is where most funding should be focused, limit our ability to move towards fully educating everyone. SWAPs and sector investment plans should be encouraged to move towards post-primary education, and away from a linear and limited model of only primary and secondary. Space is needed for alternatives. Similarly, the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) should include post-primary, as more benefit will be gained for girls through a variety of approaches. Transforming these structures requires a concerted focus on all three policy areas: FTI, MTEFs, and SWAPs.

5.2 Flexibility in secondary structures

Singapore presents an interesting example here (Personal communication with Fay Chung, 10 August 2006). As early as grade 3 students are tracked into three streams: super, normal, and monolingual. Each stream has a different time frame within which

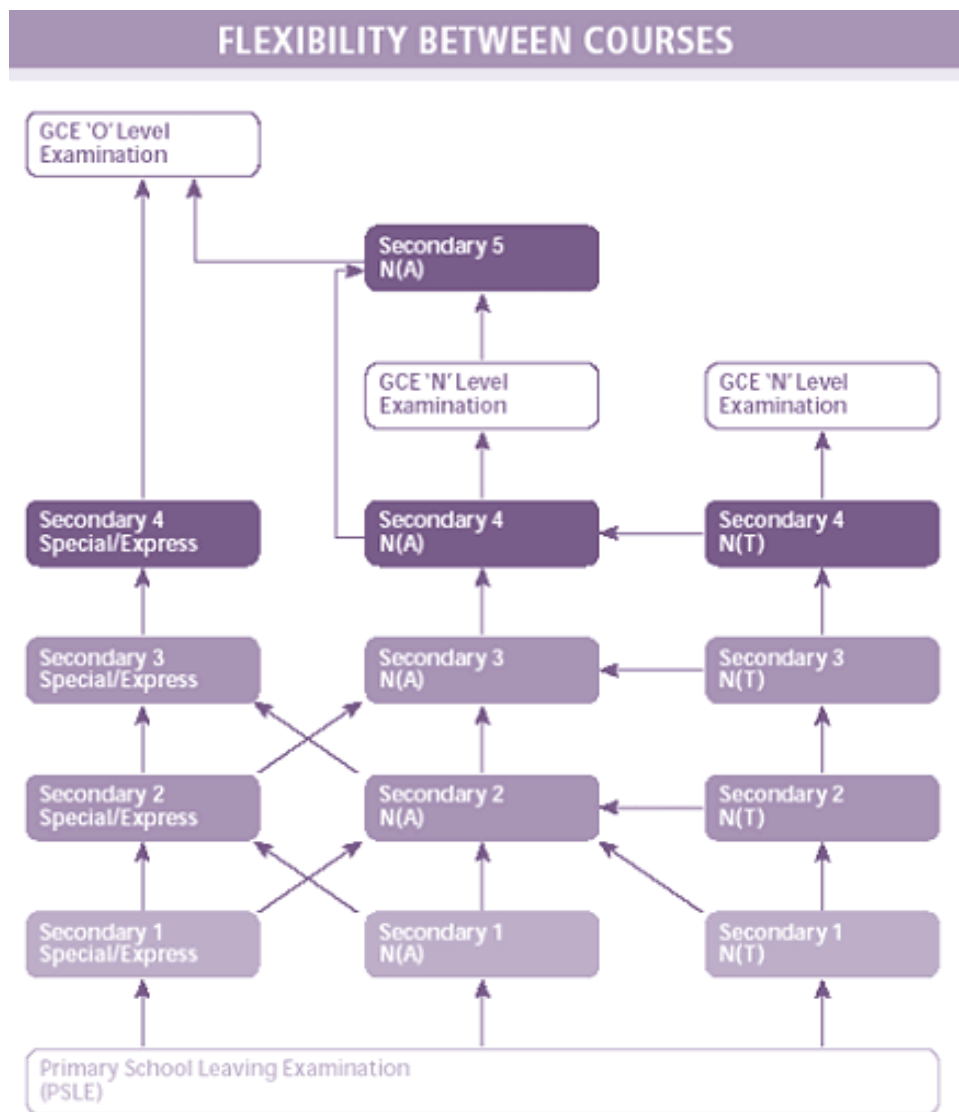
to complete primary education: 6, 7, or 8 years, corresponding to the three streams. The idea is that everyone gets to secondary (and to tertiary), but may take somewhat different routes to get there.

Upon passing the Primary School Leaving exams, students have more flexibility in their choices than is typical in most tracked systems. Depending on the exam scores earned, students choose from a range of options (Singapore MOE 2006, 2004). Students entering the “normal” courses choose between an academic (N/A) or technical (N/T) track and most take the “N” level examination after four years. (See Figure 5.) The more able students in the N/A track can move to a fifth year, and take the “O” level exam. The Special and Express track leads directly to the “O” level

exams, and also includes high levels of mother tongue languages. In addition, there is more flexibility in moving across tracks, particularly from N/T to N/A, and back and forth between N/A and the Special/Express courses (per the diagonal and horizontal arrows in Figure 5).

Another aspect of Singapore’s flexible system relates to technical/vocational education. Singapore is characterized by high population density and small geographical size. For this reason, they have put technical/ vocational equipment in every fifth secondary school; these facilities are then shared among five nearby schools. These specialized technical/vocational schools may have over 20 specialist teachers. Because Singapore is promoting high level education for everyone, within a high-tech model, many supports are

Figure 5. Flexibility between courses



Source: Singapore Ministry of Education. 2004. Secondary School Courses. Ministry of Education Website. Retrieved October 26, 2006, from http://www.moe.gov.sg/corporate/eduoverview/Sec_course.htm

provided for students to complete sixth form education (university entrance) and develop strong technical skills.¹

While Singapore's technical/vocational model may not be easily transferable to African countries, because of the very unique Singaporean context (small size and city-state structure), sharing facilities may be workable in some areas. However, where distances are longer, as in African countries, girls are often disadvantaged because of lack of gender-specific facilities (e.g., toilets, private and safe spaces for girls) and family preferences to keep girls closer to home. For this reason, careful planning would be necessary if such a shared system were promoted outside of places like Singapore.

Flexibility in moving across tracks or streams in formal school systems, or in moving in and out of school, would enable more students – girls and boys – to accommodate life issues that would traditionally terminate their schooling. For example, in many countries, pregnancy is the end of formal schooling for girls. Where they are able to continue in school, or re-enter school, they are not denied their right to education. In addition, where life skills education can be combined with academic and/or technical/vocational education, concerns such as sexuality, pregnancy, and parenting can be supported so that there might be less interruption in academic/technical schooling. Finally, in emergency situations, a flexible and dynamic approach is necessary in order to address the changing and unique circumstances.



5.3 A seamless system: Mainstreaming alternative approaches

Besides flexibility within formal education systems, flexibility and coordination across formal and nonformal education are recommended by DeJaeghere (2004). She argues that adolescent girls can have any of the nonformal or formal education experiences as indicated in Figure 6, and that a seamless system would allow them to move among different educational options.

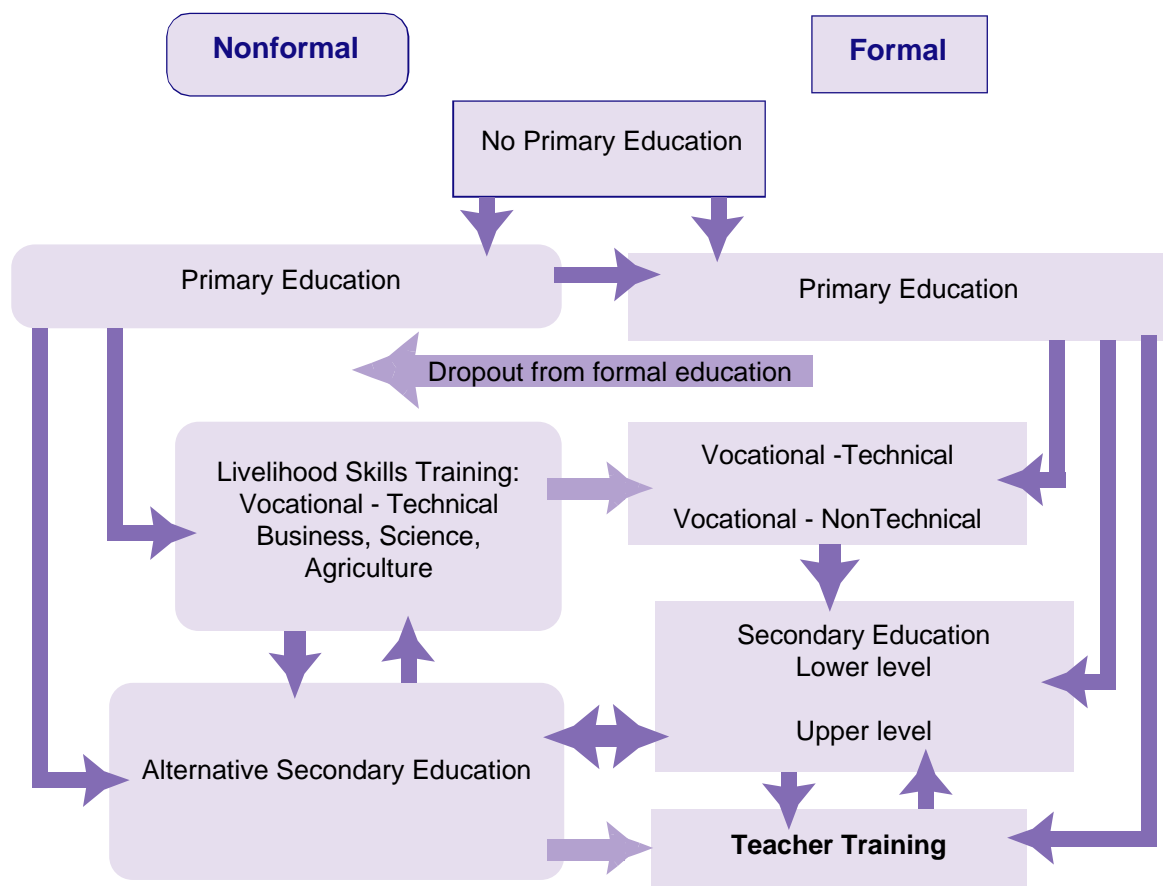
Mainstreaming alternative or nonformal approaches to education would ensure that girls can more easily move back and forth in order to complete and achieve in education. Because of the emerging consensus that the two modes of education should not be mutually exclusive or competing entities, all options that support educational success should be recognized, supported, and accepted (DeJaeghere 2004: 12). With a more synergetic relationship between formal and nonformal education, two dynamics that would strengthen both are expected:

First, mainstreaming would transform the traditional formal education system to allow for "new types of programmes, structures, and forms" and to create a system that responds to change and learns from experience. (DeJaeghere 2004, quoting from Wright 2001: 11)

Mainstreaming approaches also creates legitimacy and acceptance for non-traditional innovations, and promotes equity. (DeJaeghere 2004, citing Wright 2001)

In many ESAR countries, mainstreaming alternative approaches could help to create educational opportunities that are more appropriately valued and, as such, can be viable choices. When families or students choose from a legitimated system to which they have limited or no access, and one that is thought to be inadequate but which they can gain access, the choice is optimal. A stratified system such as this is severely limited in affecting socioeconomic change in communities and nations, and thus it tends to perpetuate inequities.

Figure 6. A seamless system



Source: DeJaeghere, Joan G. 2004, August 13. *Background Paper for Workshop 1; Quality Education and Gender Equality*. International Conference on Education, 47th Session, Geneva, Sept. 8-11, 2004. UNICEF.

5.4 Country driven

Recent thinking in the development assistance literature and practice has seen a shift to cross-sector and sector-wide strategies, as well as to holistic and integrated approaches to issues. Moreover, there is growing consensus about the need for strategies to be country-driven and country-led. In this vein, Lewin (2005: 415) suggests that “post-primary provision needs to be integrated into national educational planning much more explicitly than has recently been the case. Many SSA countries have devoted little public policy space to debating and developing strategies for secondary (or more generally post-primary) access and participation over the last decade.” He then suggests the following necessary steps:

1. Map[ping] the sector in more detail than is generally available. Data on secondary education provision is conspicuous by its absence and poor quality across SSA.

2. Developing coherent, costed and focused medium-term strategies for secondary education and other forms of post-primary provision informed with clear vision of desired outcomes and developmental priorities.
3. Setting targets, which are (among others):
 - a. generated and owned through the process which embeds them in the national policy debate and seeks to generate a consensus amongst key stakeholders and ownership by implementers;
 - b. differentiated across countries to reflect different starting points, priorities, historic realities, political possibilities, and resource constraints[.] (Lewin 2005: 415–6)

Because educational innovation must be sustained at the national level, and because each country is best suited to have a broad yet detailed understanding of its own particular context and concerns, initiatives should be driven at the country level. These initiatives should have the strong support of others, too, which would include adequate funding.

5.5 Package of interventions

In her recent report on girls' education strategies, which included a review of the literature, country experiences, and strategies tried and tested by various donors, Kane (2004) found that most strategies used in recent projects involve a package of interventions, "often intended to deal with multiple constraints" (p. 98). Kane provides the example of Malawi, where the number of girls in primary school doubled between 1990 and 1997. Strategies used included waivers of fees, school construction, especially in rural areas, scholarships for girls attending secondary school, social mobilization and girls' clubs, readmission of girls after pregnancy, reforms in girls' initiation ceremonies, textbook revisions, and changes in classroom practices (Kane 2004: 98; Stromquist and Murphy 1996). Furthermore, Kane adds that "the best progress has been made in countries using social assessments, surveys or other studies to identify major constraints and issues and to tailor a strategy package to their unique situation" (2004: 99).

5.6 Post-primary education and poverty reduction

Poverty reduction strategy papers will also be useful to reveal further the critical role of post-primary education as a strategic approach to poverty reduction. If we widen the net to include youth beyond primary school (e.g., "secondary plus"), poverty can be attacked from multiple dimensions. Post-primary forms of education can make inroads into poverty reduction beyond those linked to secondary education. Vocational-technical education is one example: youth not afforded access to secondary can still contribute, perhaps more centrally, in economic development if they gain more skills than they would if they were to end the formal schooling without other options. Enabling movement in and out of the formal system (into and out of nonformal education, for example) will increase access to more youth than when there is but one chance to enter secondary school. Because poverty is a complex phenomenon, diverse and multiple approaches to countering it are necessary.



5.7 Policy concerns: Where do we go from here?

There appears to be a policy vacuum around secondary education. Most countries have experienced less difficulty in building political consensus and in designing and implementing policies for primary and tertiary education than for secondary education.

Secondary education policy choices are more ambiguous and complex because of the intrinsic duality of secondary education, which is at once

- terminal and preparatory
- compulsory and postcompulsory
- uniform and diverse
- meritocratic and compensatory
- geared to serving both individual needs and interests and societal and labor market needs
- involved in integrating students and offsetting disadvantages but also, within the same institution, in selecting and screening students according to academic ability
- charged with offering a common curriculum for all students and a specialized curriculum for some. (World Bank 2005: 14)

Furthermore, secondary-level curricula in many countries are outdated, overloaded, and irrelevant to students' needs. There is a strong "need for curriculum reform that can encourage creative innovations in learning and teaching, new methods of assessment capable of capturing valued learning outcomes, and selection of

content and thinking skills that are more rather than less relevant to entrants to the labour market, and to a much broader range of learners” (Lewin 2005: 410). We have argued that a focus on post-primary education (vs. secondary education primarily) can accomplish this.

A major challenge, then, lies in conceptualizing post-primary education as a cumulative learning process that seamlessly integrates the formal, nonformal, and informal learning opportunities of good quality in a framework that is flexible, relevant, and responsive to the diverse needs of its learners. Therefore, at this level it becomes imperative for education to be seen as a cumulative learning process that is as diverse as the learners it serves and is flexible and responsive to their needs.

Likewise, on the basis of her review of individual country experiences, Kane (2004: 10) suggests that successful projects share the following characteristics:

- Country ownership
- An overall guiding country plan within which to work
- A strong analytical framework underpinning decision-making processes
- A holistic approach to gender issues, including the organic integration of gender issues into projects
- Capacity building and institutional strengthening rather than “tinkering at the margins”
- Strengthening gender awareness at the community level
- Working with NGOs
- Systematic monitoring of results.

Furthermore, much of the work on girls’ education would benefit from a more robust gender analysis; and it would focus on gender not only within schools, but in communities, cultures, societies, and economic and political ideologies. Aikman and Unterhalter (2005) argue that there are three ways of thinking about how the MDGs could promote gender equality, with likely results ranging from little change to a deeper form of transformational change:

- “[A] ‘business as usual’ approach” that consists of inconsistent implementation and

It is imperative for education to be seen as a cumulative learning process that is as diverse as the learners it serves and is flexible and responsive to their needs.

concentrates primarily on improving access ... (p. 246).

- Assuming that EFA will be achieved as proposed in the Dakar Framework for Action, and, as a result, all children, including girls, will be in school.
- A “full vision for gender equality, as presented in the Beijing Platform for Action will be realised, together with the resolutions made at other key international forums” (p. 246).

The first scenario is not satisfactory; it leaves inequitable structures in place so that deep and lasting change will not occur. The second enables or is a step towards the third, where we see possibilities for structural, systemic, sustainable, and gender-equitable change. In a model such as the second, however, where enrolment is the primary target, quality will likely not be fully addressed, and dynamics beyond formal schooling are not included. Vital linkages across sectors, and between communities and schools will not be fully engaged. Likewise, the links between gender equality in education, and wider gender-equality agendas would be limited. The third vision recognizes the integral relationship of educational equity with broader societal change for gender equality. Sustainability and empowerment are key as both outcomes of educational experience, and as methods towards structural, systemic, and gender-equitable change. Such a process would be mutually reinforcing. In order to move in this direction, we must understand cultural, social, political, and economic contexts, along with the structural and cultural underpinnings of gender relations.

Good policy should be based on good research. While what follows is not a complete list, it does suggest some of the more salient areas in which research is warranted.

1. Examine ESAR countries where girls are more represented than boys in primary and/or secondary schools.
 - a. Is this a recent development? How are special programmes that currently or historically exist implicated in the current situation?
 - b. Why are girls over-represented? Are they attaining higher levels of education, or are boys dropping out at earlier ages? Why are girls staying in school and why are boys not staying in school? Context is critical: the reasons may be different across settings.

- c. How are gender relations implicated in these patterns? That is, what beliefs and societal structures influence the patterns in school enrolment, attainment, choices, and success?
 - d. How is higher educational involvement of girls related to fertility rates, women's empowerment, spread of disease, and the like?
 - e. How does secondary schooling relate to cultural values? Are there tensions? If so, a close examination of them is important.
 - f. How is higher educational participation by girls understood by local communities, and how does this understanding influence their decisions about educating their boy and girl children?
2. Focus our research not only on girls but on boys and girls, and on gender relations.
 - a. How do boys and girls, differently and similarly, experience educational opportunities in local contexts?
 - b. What are the particular needs of girls? What are the particular needs of boys? How might strategies that focus on any particular gendered need affect the other group?
 - c. Beyond counting the number of boys and girls in school at various levels, a fuller understanding of the gendered nature of social relations is critical, as this dimension may give us deeper insights into why we see the patterns we see.
 - i. How are gendered social relations perpetuating the current gendered patterns in educational experience?
 - ii. How can gendered social relations be incorporated into strategies for gender-equitable change?
 - iii. How might gendered social relations that are not equitable be transformed?

3. Examine the data of several ESAR countries that represent the spectrum of educational access and gender parity, with an eye to understanding fully the range of patterns, similarities, differences, etc.

- a. What seem to be critical factors evident in the differences indicated?
- b. How do the various factors interact, in context, to contribute to the dynamics evident in particular contexts?
- c. How are gender relations embedded in the patterns and dynamics?

As international agencies, governments, nongovernment organizations, local communities, and families move towards considering and implementing a more dynamic set of education options for today's youth, reframing our focus towards post-primary education is critical if we expect to transcend the well-known difficulties in establishing formal school systems for all. If we want formal schools for all, we need interim strategies that are broader than formal schooling. If we want "education" for all – that is, education in a variety of forms as opposed to only one form – then we must consider creative strategies and understand the potential for those strategies in all their complexities. The flexibility, responsiveness, and dynamism that is possible through a focus on post-primary education is promising.

Chapter Notes

¹ Lower level jobs in Singapore are filled through immigration.

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