



FACTSHEET 1

The World's Best Investment: Girls' Education

Photo Credit: Malin Fezehai / HUMAN for the Malala Fund

KEY MESSAGE

Girls' education brings high returns not just for income and economic growth, but in other crucial areas as well—including improving children's and women's survival rates and health, reducing population growth, protecting children's rights and delaying child marriage, empowering women in the home and in the workplace, and improving climate change adaptation.

KEY EVIDENCE

- 1. PROMOTES ECONOMIC GROWTH
- 2. IMPROVES WAGES AND JOBS
- 3. SAVES LIVES
- 4. LEADS TO HEALTHIER, SMALLER FAMILIES
- 5. RESULTS IN HEALTHIER, BETTER-EDUCATED CHILDREN
- 6. DECREASES HIV/AIDS AND MALARIA
- 7. DECREASES CHILD MARRIAGE
- 8. LEADS TO EMPOWERMENT
- 9. PROMOTES POLITICAL LEADERSHIP
- 10. REDUCES HARM FROM NATURAL DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE



1. PROMOTES ECONOMIC GROWTH

Investing in education, especially girls' education, increases economic and agricultural productivity and therefore contributes to economic growth.

Increasing the number of women completing secondary education by just 1 percent could increase a country's economic growth by 0.3 percent. But even more significantly, increasing the number of people with strong literacy and numeracy scores can increase growth by a full 2 percent.¹

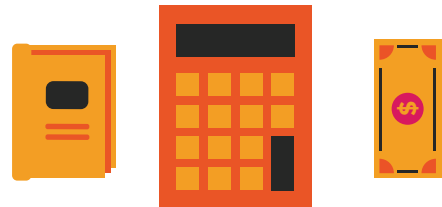


Photo Credit: Malin Fezehai / HUMAN for the Malala Fund



2. IMPROVES WAGES AND JOBS

Decades of research shows that better-educated women earn more, have better jobs, and invest their earnings into their families. Considering many women across the globe work in informal or unpaid work, a steady job and higher wages translates into better outcomes for families. Every additional year of school a woman attends increases her wages by an average of 12 percent. Also, if she has above-average math skills she can earn 18 percent more.²

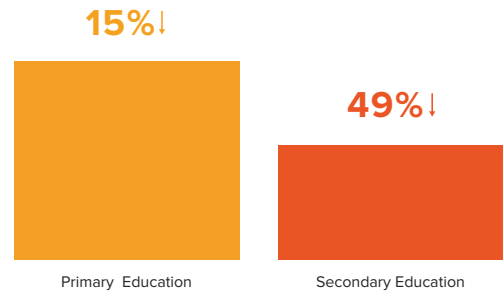




3. SAVES LIVES

Increasing girls' education reduces infant and maternal mortality because educated mothers have fewer pregnancies, are less likely to give birth as teenagers, and are better able to seek and negotiate life-saving health care for themselves and their young children.³

REDUCTION IN CHILD MORTALITY RATES BASED ON MOTHER'S EDUCATION LEVEL

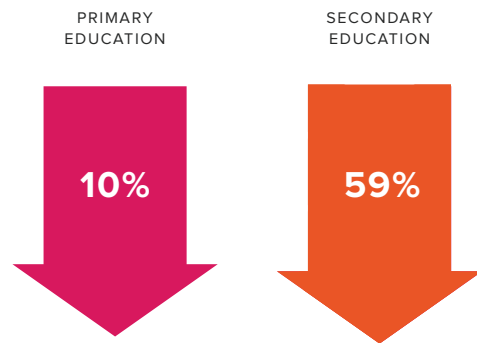


4. LEADS TO HEALTHIER, SMALLER FAMILIES

Women with higher levels of education have fewer children, are more likely to give birth for the first time later in life, and to have children more than two years apart.

Specifically, reducing the number of girls giving birth before age 17 would promote healthier, smaller families. If all women had a primary education, early births could fall by 10 percent. If all women had a secondary education, early births could fall by 59 percent by the age of 15 to 18.^{5, 6, 7}

REDUCTION IN EARLY BIRTHS FOR EDUCATED WOMEN





5. RESULTS IN HEALTHIER, BETTER-EDUCATED CHILDREN

Better-educated mothers have healthier and better-educated children, who are more likely to benefit from adequate nutrition and immunizations, attend school more regularly and longer, and study more frequently.

On average, each additional year of school a mother attends leads to her children completing four more months of school by the age of 15 to 18.⁸



Photo Credit: Malin Fezehai / HUMAN for the Malala Fund



6. DECREASES HIV/AIDS AND MALARIA

Girls and women who are better educated are less likely to contract and spread HIV/AIDS because they have more knowledge about how it is contracted and practice safer sex. For that reason, girls' education is often called the “social vaccine.” The same is true for malaria.

If all young adults completed primary education, we could expect 700,000 fewer new cases of HIV infections each year, or 7 million in a decade.

As for malaria, if all mothers completed a secondary education the odds that children would carry malaria parasites would be 36 percent lower.^{9, 10, 11}

FEWER CASES OF HIV INFECTIONS IF ALL ADULTS COMPLETED PRIMARY SCHOOL

700K LIVES
PER YEAR



=

7M LIVES PER
DECADE





7. DECREASES CHILD MARRIAGE

A high-quality education for girls is a critical strategy for preventing child marriage and improving the lives of girls who are already married. Across 18 of the 20 countries with the highest prevalence of child marriage, girls with no education are up to six times more likely to marry as children than girls with a secondary education.¹²

LIKELIHOOD THAT GIRLS MARRY AS CHILDREN



Girls with No Education



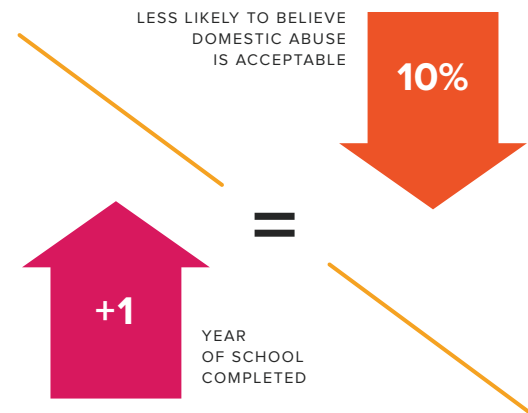
Girls with Secondary Education



8. LEADS TO EMPOWERMENT

Educating women and girls improves their agency and empowers them. For example, women with higher levels of education are less likely to accept domestic violence, more likely to have control over household resource decisions, and have greater freedom to move about on their own.

In a study of one African country, for every additional year of school a woman completed she was 10 percent less likely to believe domestic abuse is acceptable.¹³





9. PROMOTES POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Girls' education helps give women the skills they need to take on leadership roles in public life. In those roles, they are much more likely to advocate for decisions and policy that benefit family and community life, such as improved education and social services. In India, increasing the number of women who can read and write by 8 percent would increase the share of female candidates by 16 percent, the share of votes obtained by women by 13 percent, and female voter turnout by 4 percent.¹⁴

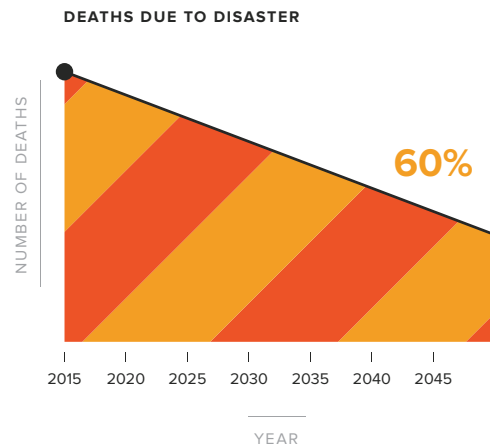
IF FEMALE LITERACY INCREASED 8% IN INDIA



10. REDUCES HARM FROM NATURAL DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Around the world, better-educated women are able to protect themselves and their families from the effects of natural disasters because they can provide higher quality of care for their children in the face of crisis and navigate the challenges posed to bounce back quicker.

Deaths due to disaster could be reduced by 60 percent by 2050 if 70 percent of all 20-39 year old women completed lower-secondary school.¹⁵



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Glass Half Full: Crisis Amid Progress

Photo Credit: Malin Fezehai / HUMAN for the Malala Fund






KEY MESSAGE

The story of girls' education in 2015- the final year of the Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals- is a story of both immense progress and a still-devastating crisis. Progress has been achieved especially in terms of girls' access to schooling: Since 2000, the number of out-of-school girls has been nearly cut in half and women and girls are spending more time in school than ever before, an average of 7 years.

But even with the enormous progress that has been achieved, the state of girls' education remains nothing less than a crisis, with millions of the world's most marginalized girls still unable to access and complete a full course of schooling, millions more who are in school but not learning at even basic levels, and millions whose education is disrupted by violence and humanitarian crises. These six lenses show where the crisis in girls' education remains.

KEY EVIDENCE

-  1. GETTING INTO SCHOOL
-  2. STAYING IN SCHOOL
-  3. LEARNING IN SCHOOL

-  4. LAGGING BEHIND IN HOT SPOT COUNTRIES
-  5. OUT OF SCHOOL DUE TO CRISIS
-  6. THE MOST MARGINALIZED



1. GETTING INTO SCHOOL

There are more than 62 million girls who should be in primary and lower secondary school but are not.¹

62
MILLION



2. STAYING IN SCHOOL

In Sub-Saharan Africa, 75 percent of girls start primary school but only 8 percent finish secondary school.²

 75% OF GIRLS START PRIMARY SCHOOL

 8% OF GIRLS FINISH SECONDARY SCHOOL



3. LEARNING IN SCHOOL

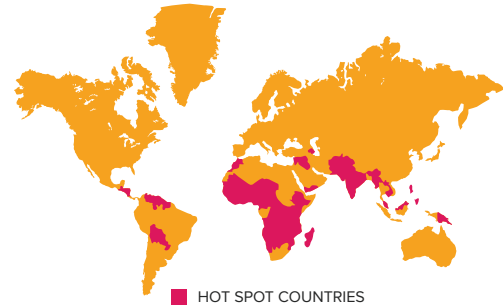
There are 250 million children in the world who do not meet basic proficiency standards for math and reading. This includes 130 million who are in school and 120 million who have never been to school.³





4. LAGGING BEHIND IN HOT SPOT COUNTRIES

While many countries have made impressive progress, millions of girls live in “hot spot” countries where progress has stalled. A global study looking at indicators of access and learning levels finds that there are 80 countries in the world where progress on girls' education is severely lagging behind.⁴

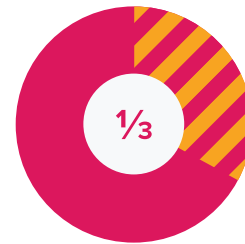


5. OUT OF SCHOOL DUE TO CRISIS

There are 37 million children out of school in countries affected by humanitarian emergencies due to war, disasters, and health epidemics.⁵

- OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN
- OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN LIVING IN CRISIS

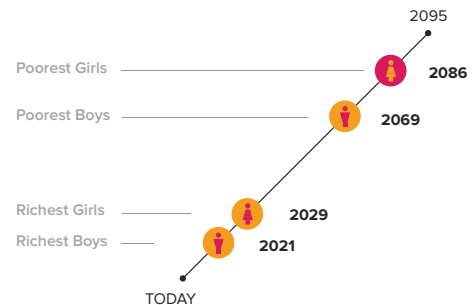
CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL



6. THE MOST MARGINALIZED

Being a poor rural girl is a triple disadvantage. For example in sub-Saharan Africa, it is predicted that all of the richest boys will be completing primary school by 2021, all of the richest girls by 2029, all of the poorest boys by 2069, but not until 2086 for all of the poorest girls on the continent.⁶

PREDICTED YEARS SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA WILL REACH UNIVERSAL PRIMARY SCHOOL COMPLETION



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What Works to Get and Keep Girls in School

Photo Credit: Malin Fezehai / HUMAN for the Malala Fund

KEY MESSAGE

A full course of schooling, from early childhood education through finishing secondary school, is key to unlocking our global potential. There is a strong evidence base that shows us what works to ensure girls go to and stay in school, including strategies for reaching the most marginalized and out-of-school girls.

KEY EVIDENCE



1. MAKING SCHOOLS AFFORDABLE



2. ADDRESSING GIRLS' HEALTH



3. REDUCING TIME AND DISTANCE TO SCHOOL



4. DEVELOPING GIRL-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS



5. SUSTAINING EDUCATION DURING EMERGENCIES



6. PROMOTING STRATEGIES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL AND MARGINALIZED ADOLESCENT GIRLS

1. MAKING SCHOOLS AFFORDABLE

Eliminating school fees and off-setting indirect costs of girls' schooling with financial resources has been an effective strategy for enrolling and keeping girls in school all over the world. For example, in Malawi a cash transfer program that gave money to families on the condition their daughters attend school at least 80 percent of the time helped to double the re-enrollment of adolescent girls who had previously dropped out.^{1,2}

RE-ENROLLMENT IN SCHOOL



In the Program

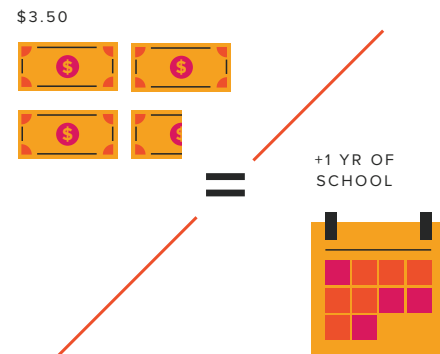


Not in the Program

2. ADDRESSING GIRLS' HEALTH

Ensuring girls from poor households have access to proper nutrition and healthcare such as deworming medication, meals, and sanitation facilities makes them more likely to attend school.

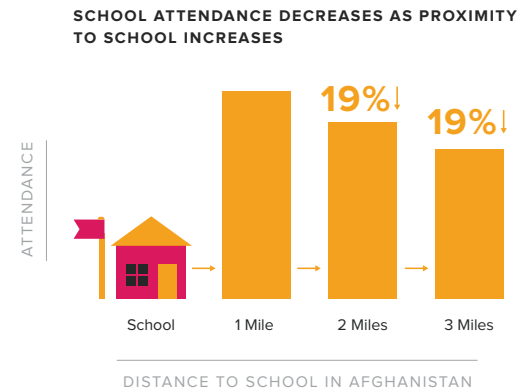
Deworming had a positive impact on increasing girls' and boys' school attendance in Kenya at a small cost of \$3.50 for each additional year of schooling induced.³





3. REDUCING TIME AND DISTANCE TO SCHOOL

Evidence from countries around the world has shown that building schools that are close to a girl's home can help boost her attendance by cutting down the distance she has to travel. Furthermore, community schools that are placed in the village and staffed with local teachers can have an even bigger impact by closing the “cultural distance,” allowing girls to feel comfortable and confident at school.^{4, 5}



4. DEVELOPING GIRL-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS

Making schools girl-friendly includes a variety of interventions, such as ensuring there are strict policies against sexual abuse and exploitation, teachers are trained on gender equality, and clean water and safe toilets are available.

For example, schools in Burkina Faso that implemented a multi-faceted intervention to make schools more girl-friendly increased girls' enrollment by 6.6 percent and boosted academic performance.^{6, 7, 8}



Photo Credit: Malin Fezehai / HUMAN for the Malala Fund



5. SUSTAINING EDUCATION DURING EMERGENCIES

Restoring education is crucial for protecting and caring for children during the difficult conditions of humanitarian emergencies. Even amid conflict and crisis, one can find ways to help girls and boys continue their education, although it may not be delivered in a school.

For example, formal education was disrupted for child refugees in Uganda who fled conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, but a majority of these children were able to continue their education in child-friendly spaces.

Seventy-five percent of girls and 71 percent of boys attended. For girls in particular participation improved their mental health and wellbeing and increased their social skills, compared to children who did not participate in the program.⁹

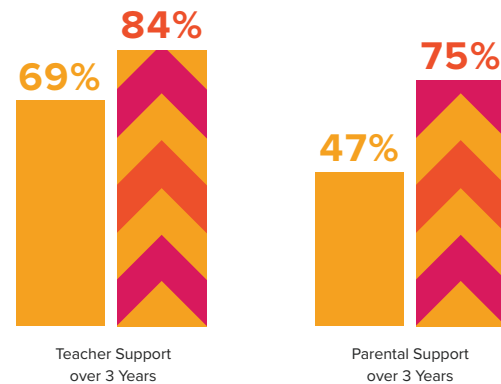


6. PROMOTING STRATEGIES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL AND MARGINALIZED ADOLESCENT GIRLS

For many marginalized girls, completing basic education is even a significant challenge. It is important not to forget those girls who have been forced to drop out of school, especially because there are many evidence-based strategies to provide alternative educational paths for these adolescent girls.

For example, in many countries, girls who become pregnant are forced out of school and not allowed to return due to outdated policies and the attitudes of teacher and parents. However, programs that target communication, policy, and teacher training have been effective at changing these attitudes. In Zambia, such a campaign increased teacher support for re-admitting pregnant girls from 69 to 84 percent and parental support from 47 to 75 percent in just three years.^{10, 11}

CHANGE IN SUPPORT OF GIRLS ATTENDING SCHOOL DUE TO CAMPAIGN IN ZAMBIA



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What Works to Ensure Quality Learning

Photo Credit: Malin Fezehai / HUMAN for the Malala Fund



KEY MESSAGE

While millions of girls around the world do not have access to schooling, there are also millions more girls and boys attending school but failing to learn even basic reading and math. However, there is nothing inevitable about this learning crisis. High-quality learning for girls and young people in developing countries is possible and doable. In fact, there is a broad range of evidence showing what works to support quality learning for both girls and boys.

KEY EVIDENCE



1. HIRING GOOD AND ENGAGING TEACHERS



2. IMPROVING HOW TEACHERS TEACH



3. ALIGNING THE CURRICULUM WITH STUDENT NEEDS



4. CULTIVATING SOFT SKILLS



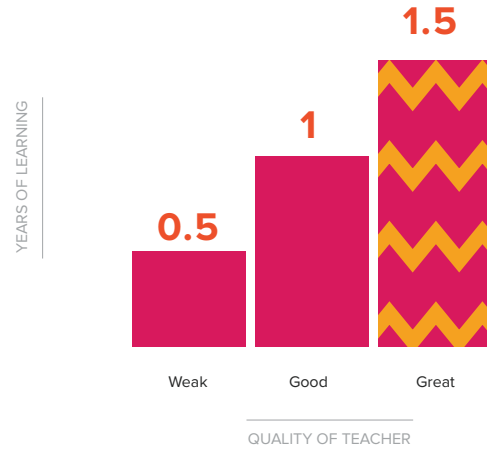
5. ENGAGING COMMUNITIES



1. HIRING GOOD AND ENGAGING TEACHERS

A first and critical step to assuring that a girl has a high-quality learning experience is to have enough qualified teachers who attend school regularly and engage students in their lessons.

Having a good teacher is equivalent to an average gain in learning of one school year; having a great teacher is equivalent to 1.5 years of learning; but having a weak teacher means mastering less than half of the expected subject content.^{1,2}



2. IMPROVING HOW TEACHERS TEACH

Training teachers is important and especially effective when paired with interventions to improve the conditions in which teachers teach, including continuous professional support and opportunities for further training and qualification.

In Liberia, a program that trained teachers how to teach reading improved students' reading performance, particularly for girls. At the end of the program, the additional training and support tripled girls' reading fluency.³



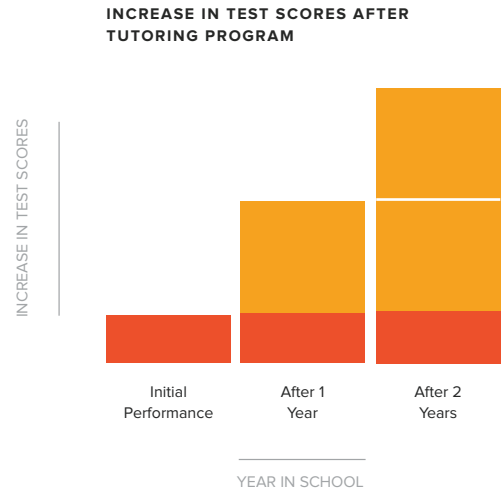
Photo Credit: Malin Fezehai / HUMAN for the Malala Fund



3. ALIGNING THE CURRICULUM WITH STUDENT NEEDS

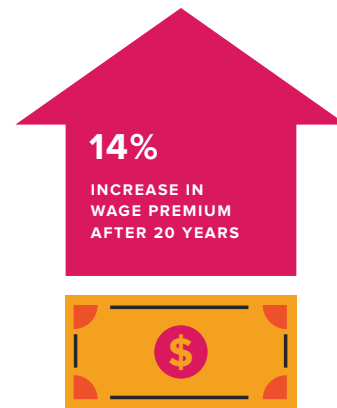
Teaching a standard curriculum to a class of students who are at different levels leaves many students behind. Providing more personalized, focused attention based on what each student is struggling with is a more effective way to boost student learning.

For example, in India, a program that provided 2 hours a day of small-group tutoring for students who were behind in specific subjects increased test scores for all students in the class but especially for those who were farthest behind.⁴



4. CULTIVATING SOFT SKILLS

Research shows that what has traditionally been considered “soft skills”—such as communication, collaboration, grit, and creativity—may be some of the most crucial skills for girls and boys to master in order to be successful in their life and work. Soft skills have similar if not higher returns to hard skills. For example, an increase in the index of a person's self-control and motivation is associated with a 14 percent wage premium 20 years later.^{5,6}





5. ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

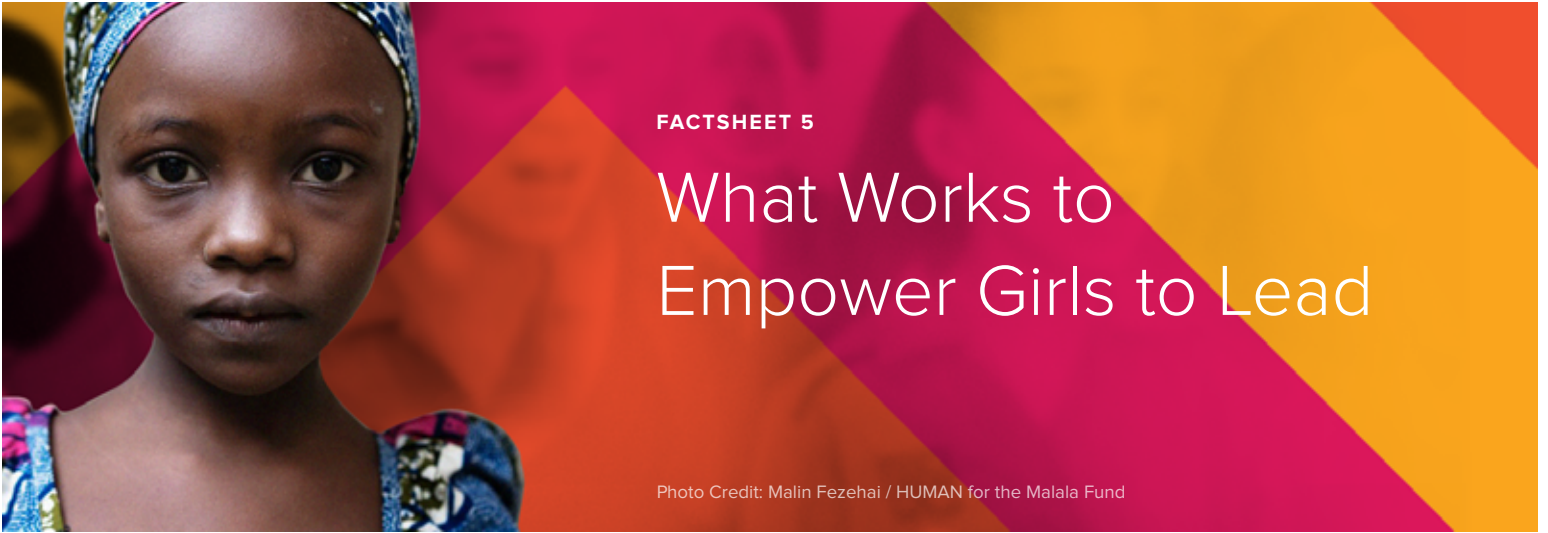
Sustaining high-quality education for girls requires involving members of the community like parents and community leaders. Some community engagement practices that improve school quality for girls include explicit agreements with communities to educate girls as well as boys, increasing communities' influence over teacher hiring and school management, and creating partnerships between communities and governments operating schools.

For example, in Indonesian schools that involve village councils and community members in their school committees, teachers spend an average of one extra hour at work each day. Parents of children in these schools spend nearly one and a half more hours helping their children with their homework each week. And, students score significantly higher on their exams, particularly girls in math.⁷



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FACTSHEET 5

What Works to Empower Girls to Lead

Photo Credit: Malin Fezehai / HUMAN for the Malala Fund

KEY MESSAGE

Education empowers a woman in many ways, especially her capacity to control and make decisions about her own life. This is because the skills girls acquire in school help to create “pathways” to better employment opportunities and health outcomes. They also learn how to communicate, negotiate and and engage in the world. But education can be even more empowering with an explicit focus on teaching gender equality and leadership skills to girls.

KEY EVIDENCE



1. GENDER EQUALITY IN SCHOOLS



2. FEMALE MENTORS AND ROLE MODELS



3. LEADERSHIP SKILLS



4. STRONG BRIDGES TO WORK

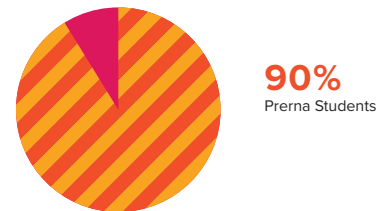
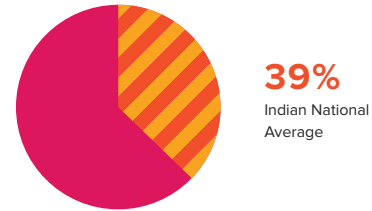


1. GENDER EQUALITY IN SCHOOLS

Ensuring school curricula, teaching materials, and teachers reflect principles of gender equality helps to empower girls and to make them equal to boys. Additionally, when teachers explicitly teach issues of gender equality, girls gain tremendously.

Prerna, a girls' education program in India, serves some of the country's poorest girls, yet students outperform national and state averages on indicators of attendance, completion, and language and mathematics achievement. Gender equality is built into the school's curriculum and taught like other subjects with the goal of developing girls' ability to challenge and resist discrimination while rising above it.^{1,2}

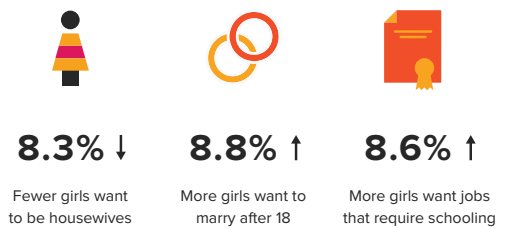
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS THAT COMPLETE GRADE 10 IN INDIA



2. FEMALE MENTORS AND ROLE MODELS

Exposure to female leaders improves perceptions of female leaders and weakens gender stereotypes about roles and norms among boys and girls, and men and women. It also significantly increases parents' aspirations for their daughters and adolescent girls' aspirations for their own education and careers. In India, in villages with a female leader for two election cycles, the gender gap in parent's aspirations for their daughters and sons closes by 20 percent and the gender gap in an adolescent's aspirations closes by 32 percent.^{3,4}

ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN INDIAN VILLAGES WITH FEMALE ELECTED OFFICIALS





3. LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Leadership skills, such as decisionmaking and negotiation, equip girls with knowledge that allows them to navigate adolescence, relationships, and the world of finance and savings. Life skills education, leadership opportunities, and extracurricular activities like sports offered at an early age through adolescence are essential for the empowerment of girls and women, enabling them take control of their education and health.

A three-year program aimed at empowering girls and teaching leadership skills through sports in Bangladesh increased girls' scores on an index of leadership competencies. For example, 75 percent of the girls active in the sports program identified themselves as leaders compared to just 31 percent of girls not in the program.⁵

Photo Credit: Malin Fezehai / HUMAN for the Malala Fund



4. STRONG BRIDGES TO WORK

Education empowers women by giving them access to better work opportunities and higher earnings. However, in many countries women are discriminated against in the workplace and girls are denied an education because their families do not think they will enter the workforce in the future. Effective strategies to overcome these barriers include a focus on bridging the gap between school and work by providing job-specific training, high-quality schooling, career counseling, and working to change perceptions about women and work.

In Madagascar, for example, an intervention that provided parents and students with statistics on the average earnings associated with each additional level of education dramatically improved parents' perceptions on the returns to education, thereby increasing enrollment by 3.5 percent. Students also performed better after learning the labor market value of school. The test scores of those who under-estimated the returns to their education increased by more than 4% in just two months.^{6,7}

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