



EQUAL *Education*

EDUCATION, EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY FOR AFRICA – THE FAWE NEWSLETTER

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Empowering African girls and women for life



How can we ensure that education programmes equip young Africans with the ideal combination of knowledge and practical skills for the transition to productive adult life? With gross enrolment in tertiary education at just six percent in sub-Saharan Africa¹, it is clear that the majority of young people joining the labour force do so immediately after secondary education.

Many will not have acquired the skills and qualifications to enable them to join the formal

sector. Many, too, will not have gained the basis for a successful transition to adulthood.

In order for young Africans to successfully step into adult roles such as work, family life and participation in their societies, education must equip them with knowledge, skills and characteristics over and above pure classroom learning. The empowerment and skills development approaches discussed in this issue of Equal Education are a crucial in order for education to fulfil this promise. ■

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¹ UNESCO (2011). *EFA Global Monitoring Report: The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education*. Paris: UNESCO.

Linking girls' education with healthier, safer transitions to adulthood



Ann Warner is the Gender and Policy Specialist at the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and leads the organisation's community of practice on adolescent-focused research, programmes and policies. She has more than 10 years of experience in research and programme development in international health and policy issues, with a focus on women and girls

Governments, civil society and the private sector recognise that education can be a transformative force for individuals as well as societies. Decades of research support the associations between women's educational attainment and improved maternal health, child nutrition, economic growth and gender equality. Adolescent girls are the link between education and these positive outcomes. When girls stay in school through their adolescence, they delay marriage and pregnancy, and they acquire the skills and information needed to be healthy and productive adults.

However, adolescent girls are still underserved by the field of international development, including the education and population and reproductive health sectors. Despite their shared long-term vision of individual empowerment and collective social and economic development, the strategies used by these sec-

The education sector holds tremendous promise for adolescent girls and their futures. It provides the platform to reach girls at scale and to provide the basic building blocks for a healthier life.

tors are frequently disjointed. The education sector has primarily focused on improving access to school, and less on retention and quality of education that will make it safe and relevant to girls and their families. The population and reproductive health sector has developed "girl-friendly" strategies to provide girls with information and resources, but has not worked much through the educational system.

By working together, we can help to ensure that schools – whether formal or non-formal – are equipping girls for transitions to adult roles, including work, family life and citizenship. School provides the information, training, and services that are the building blocks of marketable skills and social capital. When schooling – whether formal, informal, vocational or technical – is linked to the opportunities in the labour market, it will be more attractive and beneficial to both girls and their parents. When school is safe, affordable, accessible and relevant, parents are more likely to keep girls in school rather than marrying them early. Through school, girls can acquire life skills that will help them delay marriage and pregnancy. Finally, schooling can provide the information, training and exposure to increase the awareness and skills of girls to contribute to public life. When girls are more active in school and public life, family and community members will begin to see them as active and valued participants in society.

The education sector holds tremendous promise for adolescent girls and their futures. It provides the platform to reach girls at scale and to provide the basic building blocks for a healthier life. The

population and reproductive health field can lend strategies and resources to make schools more "girl-friendly" and more empowering. To do that, we will need to reach across our sectors and form new partnerships that will give all girls the resources for healthier and safer transitions to empowered adulthood. ■

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Published by

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Protecting health, rights and education for adolescent girls – the FAWE-Packard Foundation initiative

Learning environments play a key role in imparting knowledge on reproductive health and rights; such knowledge in turn plays an important role in retaining adolescent girls in school.



The health, wellbeing and success of young girls during adolescence depend heavily on the level and quality of education, health services, psycho-social support and protection they receive. Many adolescent girls face sexual health challenges including unplanned pregnancy, abortion, early marriage, transactional sex, gender-based violence, and STDs including HIV/AIDS. These challenges are often related to poverty but also to low levels of schooling and reduced access to information on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Learning environments play a key role in imparting knowledge on reproductive health and rights; such knowledge in turn plays an important role in retaining adolescent girls in school. Mindful of this inter-relatedness, FAWE has partnered with the David and Lucile Packard Foundation on a project focusing on adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights (ASRHR). The project aims to protect the health and rights of adolescent girls and enable them to fulfill their right to healthy sexuality and reproduction by improving their

access to age-appropriate information and services that meet their needs. It also seeks to address issues of retention by supporting girls who are at risk of dropping out of school through better reproductive health knowledge and practices.

Introduced in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia in 2010, the three-year initiative aims to ensure that by 2013, some 10,800 adolescent girls from a total of 30 schools and close to 10,000 individuals, including teachers, in surrounding communities will have improved knowledge and skills as regards adolescent girls' sexual and reproductive health and better access to reliable information and services on reproduction and sexuality.

Following baseline surveys conducted by FAWE National Chapters in the six countries, stakeholders participating in the project have developed criteria for

identifying girls at high risk of dropping out of school due to poverty and reproductive health issues. They have also developed scholarship packages for these girls that include tuition costs, uniforms and sanitary towels. To date, 600 girls have received scholarships and support to remain in school and are scheduled to complete secondary school by the end of the project in 2013.

Target groups have taken steps specific to their contexts to support adolescent girls. Community members in Ghana have established a watchdog initiative composed of volunteers who provide support to young girls on issues of sexuality and reproduction. In Rwanda, community ambassadors have been appointed to work with target schools to support girls on reproductive health issues, while FAWE Uganda has used the ASRHR project to strengthen guidance and counseling units in the selected schools.

FAWE has developed a training manual on ASRHR for teachers and community trainers. To date, 150 teachers and 125 community facilitators have been trained in ASRHR and are in turn training other teachers and community members in the target schools and communities.

At school level, community members and schoolgirls are being trained in the production of reusable sanitary towels. Schools are also training students using FAWE's Tuseme youth empowerment approach so that trained students can educate their peers. FAWE expects that in 2013 the impact of student peer training will be visible, particularly following implementation of action plans developed by students subsequent to the ASRHR training. ■

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Empowering African youth for adulthood and the world of work – the 2012 ADEA Triennial

There is need to rethink and contextualise current approaches to empowering girls and women in non-formal education and training

The recently concluded 2012 ADEA Triennial looked into the skilling and qualification of young Africans for the following five main transitions critical for individual success in life and for sustained economic growth and development: (i) acquiring basic education; (ii) staying healthy through adolescence and adulthood; (iii) training for securing gainful employment; (iv) forming a family; and (v) exercising citizenship.

Focusing more substantively on the first three transitions, the Triennial asked the following questions: what common core skills should African children acquire early in life in order to continue learning throughout life and participate effectively in the socio-cultural, economic and political development of their societies? What role could technical and vocational skills development (TVSD) play in enabling young people and adults to participate actively in Africa's sustainable development? How can Africa's capacity to generate, acquire, adopt and utilise scientific and technological knowledge and skills for sustainable development be built and strengthened?

ADEA's analytical work and consultative youth meeting identified five categories of common core skills: (i) communication, language and literacy skills; (ii) basic cognitive skills; (iii) personal development and life skills; (iv) social and citizenship skills; and (v) basic work-related skills. These skills should be acquired in both formal and non-formal settings. However, particular attention must be paid to girls to ensure the learning environment does not impede their acquisition of these skills. One of the key findings was that interventions in non-formal programmes targeting girls and women are not very effective due to persisting poverty and negative religious and



socio-cultural practices. There is need to rethink and contextualise current approaches to empowering girls and women in non-formal education and training.

The Triennial noted that in order for young people to acquire relevant marketable skills, Africa should revitalise its TVSD sector by significantly increasing its intake and improving its quality and relevance. Training opportunities in disciplines such as engineering and technolo-

gy are below market demand and female participation is generally low. In West Africa, female participation in these highly demanded skill areas is only 28 percent compared to 50 percent in business and commercial disciplines. Skills for the agricultural sector should also be strengthened for agriculture to play a key role in Africa's economic development. This sector could generate many employment opportunities, and given that women have predominantly sustained it, training opportunities should target them.

The Triennial also established that the majority of African countries have not formulated or implemented policies geared towards making higher education key in competing in today's global economy. Africa has the world's lowest enrolment rate in higher education, its universities produce little knowledge that could be used for innovations in industry and trade, and its university graduates often cannot find employment. In addition, women are underrepresented in the fields related to scholarship, research and development. Major reforms need to be effected in order to provide the African youth with opportunities for acquiring scientific and technological skills that are essential in the 21st century economy. ■

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Creating training and employment opportunities for girls in post-conflict situations – the FAWE-DANIDA project

The initiative works on three levels, all aimed at providing greater skills and employment opportunities for young women

The numerous challenges that exist to girls' and women's education are exacerbated by situations of conflict. Around one third of the world's 72 million out-of-school children live in just 20 conflict-affected countries¹. The majority of these children are girls and live in sub-Saharan Africa. Of the conflict-affected countries with available data, the worst 10 are in sub-Saharan Africa, Somalia being the most seriously affected with 89 percent of girls out of school.

Recognising the particular challenges to education and empowerment initiatives posed by conflict, FAWE has partnered with the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) on a project targeting the economic empowerment of girls and young women in post-conflict contexts. Introduced in Burundi, Liberia and Sierra Leone in December 2009 and in Guinea, Senegal and Somalia in January 2011, the project aims to provide out-of-school girls and young women with technical, vocational and entrepreneurship skills training in order to increase their prospects for employment.

The FAWE-DANIDA initiative works on three levels, all aimed at providing greater skills and opportunities for young women. FAWE directly targets girls and young women who are not in school, encouraging them to enrol in technical disciplines such as electricity, masonry, carpentry and auto mechanics which have greater employment opportunities

and higher earnings than non-formal activities traditionally reserved for women. The project provides financial support to these young women for their education and assists new graduates in either finding relevant employment or setting up micro businesses in their field of training.

Secondly, the FAWE-DANIDA project works with technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions to train more girls and young women. The project provides grants to the institutions to purchase training materials and equipment; trains teaching staff in gender-responsive pedagogy practices including management of sexual harassment; and facilitates the introduction of mechanisms within partner institutions to support girls who miss classes to take care of their children or during menstruation.

The third focus of the project is advocacy. FAWE encourages national education and training authorities to introduce and implement more gender-responsive TVET policies. Simultaneously, the organisation targets businesses so that they provide more employment and internship opportunities for female TVET trainees. Finally, FAWE engages with the surrounding communities on the socio-economic benefits of TVET training for girls and young women so that they support the initiative through their own lobbying efforts.

The results of the FAWE-DANIDA initiative are encouraging. In one TVET institution in Sierra Leone, girls' enrolment increased from just five percent at the start of the project to 65 percent by the end of 2011. Among those who gradu-



ated through the project in 2011 in the three pilot countries, 75 found employment or started micro businesses while 97 began internships. In the same year, 70 percent of the 538 young women enrolled through the project passed their first year exams. And notably in 2011, the government of Liberia announced plans to expand the Monrovia Vocational Training Centre into a modern training complex.

Through 2012, as the project continues in Guinea, Senegal and Somalia and ties off in Burundi, Liberia and Sierra Leone, FAWE plans to document experiences in order to strengthen implementation, use the positive results to influence policy change, and set up an alumni association to ensure the gains of the project among young women trainees are sustained. ■

¹ UNESCO (2011). *EFA Global Monitoring Report: The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education*. Paris: UNESCO.

Enabling rural mothers in Malawi to lead advocacy and community action on girls' education

Mothers' Clubs build rural women's capacity to influence behaviour and attitude change in their communities

In communities where poverty, illiteracy and cultural practices and attitudes present strong challenges to girls' education, mothers in the community have proved to be particularly effective in ensuring girls are enrolled, attend school regularly, perform well and complete their education. Their proximity to the schoolgirls, parents and leaders in their communities gives them crucial opportunities to advocate in favour of girls' education as well as a strong position of influence provided they have the knowledge and skills to advocate effectively.

FAWE's approach has thus been to place local mothers, particularly in rural areas, at the forefront of advocacy to get young girls into school and ensure the community supports girls' education. Through FAWE's Mothers' Club initiative, women advocate at grassroots level to raise awareness on the socio-

girls in need and ensure the sustainability of their Mothers' Club. The training builds the women's capacity to influence behaviour and attitude change in their communities. It also enhances their assertiveness and confidence, and gives them practical knowledge and skills in guidance and counselling.

In Malawi, where the majority of the approximately 15 million population lives in rural areas, over 700 Mothers' Clubs are currently in operation. The 14-member groups include 10 local mothers, the village head, the chairpersons of the school management committee and parents' and teachers' association, and the school head teacher. These village and school leaders support the roles of the mothers and ensure synergies with already existing school committees and associations.

Since the Mothers' Clubs were introduced in Malawi in 2002, 365 teenage mothers have been re-admitted to school in the central district of Mchinji alone. Throughout the country, groups have been actively sensitising communities on children's and women's rights as well as the school re-admission policy for adolescent mothers; supporting re-admitted girls with money for school fees, learning materials and personal hygiene supplies; and working with local police to curb gender-based violence. Some groups have created support systems for school children to report particular issues, especially cases of sexual or physical abuse. Others have taken special steps to improve the learning environment for girls, including building toilet facilities and purchasing bins, buckets and cloth wrappers for girls to facilitate privacy, comfort and hygiene during menstruation. Some groups make school uniforms and reusable sanitary pads for sale at a lower price than those sold in shops or provide meals to maintain students at school during times of food scarcity. In some cases, members of Mothers' Clubs have even returned to school to set an example to teenage mothers not interested in returning to school.

The success of the Mothers' Clubs in Malawi has encouraged local and international NGOs including Action Aid, Link Community Development and UNICEF to adopt similar initiatives. Of particular significance, Mother Clubs are now an integral part of the National Education Sector Plan of the Malawi Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. ■



economic benefits of girls' education and mobilise community support for girls' education. They also reach out to teenage mothers and other out-of-school girls and provide counselling, finances and other support so these girls can return to school and complete their education.

FAWE's Mothers' Clubs which operate in the Gambia, Liberia, Malawi and Zambia, have proved instrumental in providing rural women with skills and opportunities for community leadership and advocacy. These women receive training to build their knowledge of teachers' codes of conduct; gender constructs and gender-based violence; child-friendly schools; HIV and AIDS; human development and relationships; and guidance and counselling. They are also trained in resource mobilisation to enable them to raise funds to provide financial support to young

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‘Provide young individuals with hands-on experience’ – Vivian Ojal



Vivian Ojal is the co-founder and CEO of Armada Human Capital. She is an avid entrepreneur who has worked with several consulting firms including L.E.K Consulting in Chicago, USA, Skopos Consulting in Cairo, Egypt, and Personnel Resource in Nairobi, Kenya. She sits on the board of Afrilink Entrepreneurs and the Kenya Association of Women Business Owners.

EE: How can Africa capitalise on the enormous potential of its characteristic “youth bulge” for long-term growth?

VO: It is important to enable young entrepreneur programmes that provide mechanisms for youth as well as the general population, introduce new products and services for consumption by the local market, and create opportunities for international exposure to promote new industries and create jobs.

EE: How do Armada Human Capital’s operations contribute to long-term gains for African youth?

At Armada Human Capital, our aim is to provide opportunities to those who would otherwise be unable to enjoy direct access to available career prospects. One of our core functions is providing young individuals with hands-on experience in a professional environment. We understand the value placed on work experience today. The question most frequently asked by young job seekers is: “How can I gain experience if no one is willing to hire me?” Unfortunately, gaining credible work experience is very hard to do. Inasmuch as we cannot provide jobs to every candidate that we engage with, we do our best to provide transferable skills that will make them more marketable to prospective employers. We train young people in basic office functions and provide exposure to industries that might interest them. We also try to link outstanding candidates with their industry of choice. Armada Human Capital is also seeking to establish active career service centres in Africa’s least developed regions. These will serve as global call and data centres and will employ individuals from these developing areas. This opportunity will provide young people with invaluable training and skills that can match those of their counterparts in bigger cities.

EE: How can the corporate sector, development partners and organisations such as FAWE work more closely together to open up more opportunities for young Africans?

VO: The corporate sector should fundamentally change its view of capacity-building which is commonly limited to first tier cities and build operational capacity in second and third tier cities where there are large numbers of unemployed youth. FAWE should seek out corporate sector partners who can employ young people who have gone through its programmes, specifically career development and life skills building programmes. This will provide more employment opportunities for beneficiaries of these programmes. Corporate sponsors and NGOs would benefit from jointly raising funds which could lead to additional programmes being implemented as well as allow for donations of equipment and materials to support these programmes. Finally, African governments could give greater focus to fundraising initiatives through the World Bank, IMF, etc. Such funding could support programmes implemented by NGOs and comply with strategic objectives required by organisations such as the IMF which has strongly advocated for African governments to do more to create jobs.

EE: What education and training priorities should organisations such as FAWE focus on more in the immediate future?

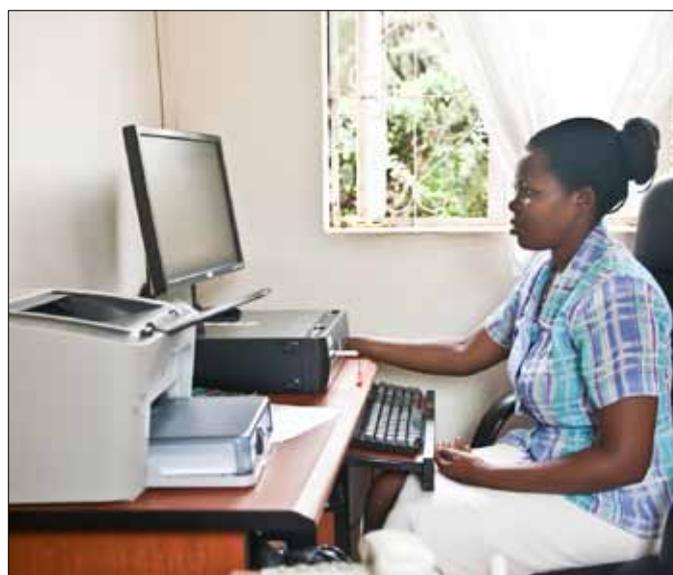
VO: It is crucial that organisations such as FAWE focus on fostering transferable skills for the young people they primarily engage with. Not only will this open up opportunities for the youth in the job market, it will give them the much-needed confidence to fuel their drive and ambition. ■

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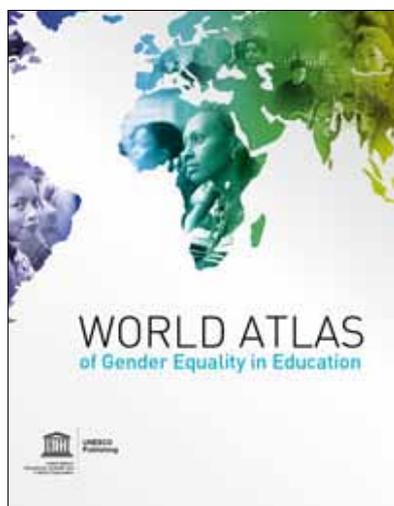
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World Atlas of Gender Equality in Education

UNESCO Institute for Statistics



This publication allows users to visualise and compare educational pathways of girls and boys around the world and to measure and analyse changes in gender disparities in education over time. Using sex-disaggregated data from indicators developed by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, it sheds new light on progress made towards gender-

related education goals set by international frameworks such as Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals. The data suggests, for instance, that while access to education remains a challenge in many countries and disparities against girls tend to be more extreme and persistent than those against boys, girls tend to outperform boys in primary school. In 63 percent of countries for which data is available, dropout rates are higher for boys than for girls. The publication finds that while only 39 percent of countries have equal proportions of boys and girls enrolled in secondary education, women make up the majority of tertiary students in two-thirds of countries with data, although men continue to dominate the highest levels of study. It also observes that the share of illiterate women in the world has remained at 63-64 percent since 1990. The publication highlights the impact of factors such as national wealth, geographic location, investment in education and fields of study, and reconfirms the need for greater focus on girls' education as a human right.

To download, please go to: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/gender-and-education/resources/the-world-atlas-of-gender-equality-in-education/>

EVENTS

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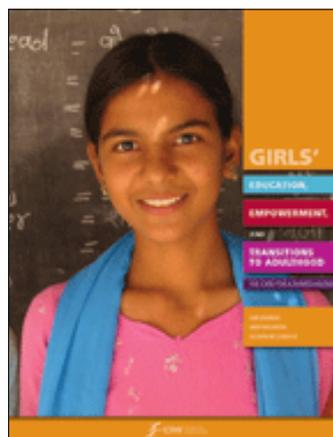
WORLD BANK - GETTING TO EQUAL IN EDUCATION: ADDRESSING GENDER AND MULTIPLE SOURCES OF DISADVANTAGE TO ACHIEVE LEARNING

22-28 April 2012

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION GLOBAL ACTION WEEK

Girls' education, empowerment and transitions to adulthood: The case for a shared agenda

International Center for Research on Women



This paper argues that the single most important development investment that can be made today is leveraging education to facilitate girls' transitions to healthy, safe and productive adulthood. Girls are critical to social change and global development, yet they face particular challenges during adolescence that have direct consequences for their health as well as for their educational and economic

opportunities. The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) observes that while education, health and other sectors concerned with the development of adolescent girls share common goals, their strategies are fragmented, leaving girls in much of the developing world underserved. Although empirical evidence, practical experience and prevailing development discourse all point to direct and positive links between women's educational attainment and greater development outcomes, there is still limited understanding of how the education of girls and women translates into these positive development outcomes. ICRW makes a case for a shift in development practice to accommodate and facilitate cross-sector collaboration to ensure that girls enjoy a healthy transition to adulthood. It argues that joint investment in girls' education, empowerment and health will yield better academic performance in the short term, healthier transitions to adulthood in the medium term and more robust development outcomes in the long term.

To download, please go to: <http://www.icrw.org/publications/girls-education-empowerment-and-transitions-adulthood>

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