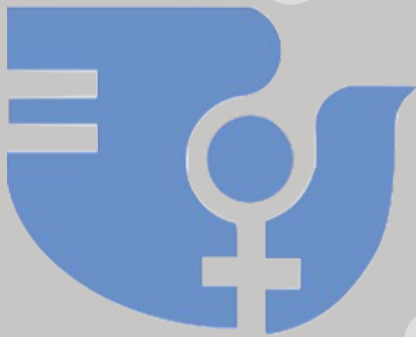


# COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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ISR *10th*  
Anniversary  
UNVA

# **Education for Women** **in Developing** **Countries**

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## **Background:**

Since before the 11th century, women were not allowed to study a complete education; it was in 1088 that the first university opened, allowing women to study and earn degrees. Eventually, more universities were established; however, not all girls were able to attend school. Even though the situation was taking place worldwide, the United Kingdom was one of the first countries to start making changes related to the freedom of women. Since the 2000s, progress has been made to solve this; hence, 41 million girls who could not attend school before now have a current academic education. Even so, about 131 million girls still have no access to public and/or private educational institutions. One of the main causes of this dilemma is that in most developing countries, girls tend to be married before they turn eighteen. According to Team, T. N, this changes the life of the adolescent because they have to immediately leave school so they can stay home and take care of their young.

Furthermore, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), about 16 million girls aged 15 to 19 and one million girls under 15 give birth every year. Funds are another contributor to this problem. Funding is an important issue when looking at the reasons why girls are not in school. Child domestic labor is also really common in many developing countries, which is another component of the issue. When this situation began, people thought that the only ones that needed education were boys and low funding was the main cause that did not give priority to giving education to girls. Education to women and girls has always been a concern since they have suffered many differences and difficulties regarding gender equality throughout history; however, it started being a concern in the UK since in the early modern period women had more freedom which led to education. Women have never been equal to men due to physical differences and stereotypes.

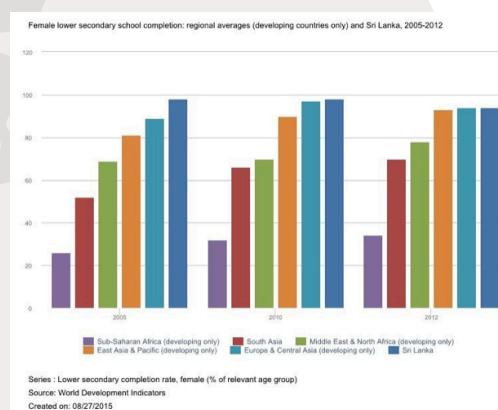
## **Global Current Situation:**

In the past 25 years, women's education has been improving in numerous ways. Every year, there is more progress on how girls attend school in countries that are still developing. Notwithstanding this improvement, a research by Brookings Education has pointed out that 80 developing countries have stopped making progress because the government decides to focus on other predicaments that the country has, ignoring the lack of education that has been granted to women and girls. BBC News has reported the *10 Toughest Places for Girls to go to School*. The rankings depend on girls not attending primary and middle school, female illiteracy rates, public spending on education, and other factors that help determine which developing countries have the worst women's education. Within these rankings are South Sudan, Central African Republic, Niger, Afghanistan, Chad, Mali, Papua New Guinea, Burkina Faso, Liberia, and Ethiopia. These countries are all in development; hence, girls struggle with education itself.

UNICEF is working so the problem does not spread to other countries through the 8 Millennium Development Goals, and later through the 16 Sustainable Development Goals. These are eight goals that were created by UNICEF to help the world's less developed people and countries. Nonetheless, only 189 countries made a commitment to these goals to be accomplished. Even so, it is hard for this struggle to continue thriving because it requires low economy and funds; only countries struggling in this aspect may experience this issue. This situation has been happening for several years now because of stereotypes, obligations, and expectations people have of women. In many countries, women are expected to stay at home, take care of children, cook, and/or become a teen mom. This, as a consequence, prevents many girls worldwide from going to school. Although advances have been carried out, they are not enough for the world to be freed from the lack of education for women in developing

countries. There are about 131 million girls in the world that still remain uneducated according to *Girls' Education and Gender Equality*. Since the beginning of this issue, things have noticeably improved. Before, most people, even women, agreed to the fact that they did not deserve an education. Nowadays their voices are being heard; people like Malala Yousafzai are fighting this battle in their daily lives. More and more girls are being educated every single day. Nevertheless, these changes and actions are not enough since, according to ABC news, 70 million children around the world are not educated and more than 50 percent of them are girls.

Additionally, according to *Facts & Figures*, women make up two-thirds of the world's 796 million illiterate people. Just 39 percent of rural girls attend secondary school. It is also important to know that every additional year of primary school increases girls' eventual wages by 10-20 percent. This, as a cause, makes the percentage of marriage and children for women decrease. UNICEF and the International Development Exchange are doing everything humanly possible for all girls around the world to obtain an education and are creating awareness of the quandary around the world.

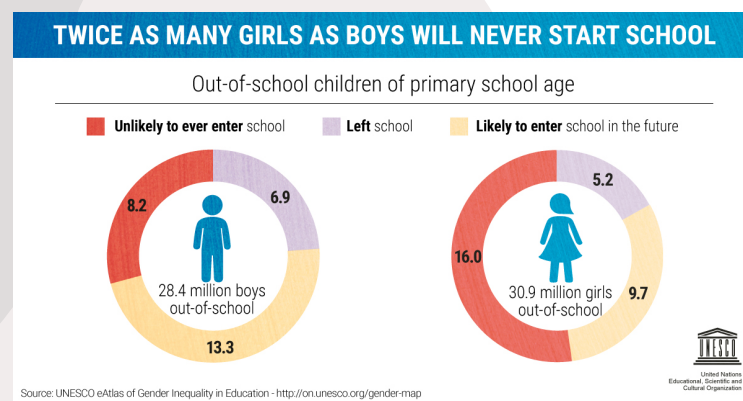


*This chart represents the lowest secondary schools for girls in developing countries throughout several years. As it can be seen the developing country that struggles the most*

with the issue of women with no education is Sri Lanka, followed by developing countries in Europe and Central Asia.

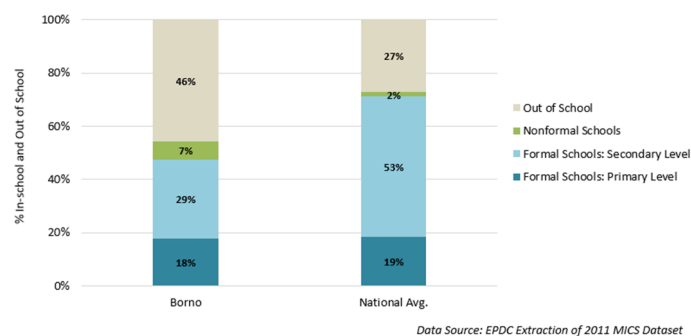
### **Specific Current Situation:**

**Africa** is one of the least developing continents in the world. According to *Girls and Women - Africa Educational Trust*, between 2010 and 2012, fewer than 2% of girls in Somalia attended secondary school. In addition, by grade 5 only half as many girls as boys attend school in Uganda and Kenya. Furthermore, only one disabled woman is educated for every five disabled men in East Africa and fewer than 12% of teachers in Uganda are female, and only 3% in Somalia. In Nigeria, only 4% of young women in the North West zone can read, compared with 99 percent of rich young women in the South East, according to *Girls' Education*. This is due to the fact that people who receive a low income or live in a remote area are more likely to be granted an education. These facts demonstrate the level of education in some of the countries in Africa that focus especially on women's education.



*This chart represents the comparison of education between boys and girls not only in Africa, but worldwide which have an impact on the results and the situation in African countries.*

**North America** is the continent that least suffers the problem of girls with no education. According to UNESCO, in the United States, the number of women who get master degrees increase by 10.6 million every year. US and Canada, which are both in North America, are considered to be highly developed countries. This issue happens way more in developing countries than in nations that have better economic stability and less political issues.



**Latin American** countries such as Venezuela, Colombia, and Guatemala are the countries in this region that deal with this quandary every day. Most of the countries in **South America** are slowly developing and still have trouble with gender equality. According to Elise Roberts and her article: *The Educational Gender Gap in Latin America: Why Some Girls Do Not Attend School*, several Latin American countries that face this problem need to figure out the why of the issue. Roberts mentions that there are several factors to the gender gap: “patriarchal society and family factors have the biggest causational effect on the gender gap.” (Kaneda). Although South America has many developing countries, there are several highly developed nations such as Brazil and Argentina. This is why there are countries in this continent that do not face this problem at all and others that suffer it every day.

**South Asia** is the most gender-unequal and insensitive region in the world, according to United Nations Girls' Education Initiative. Their cultural and social beliefs and practices cause the exclusion of girls from getting an education. Girls also face problems that prevent them from attending to school such as family, poverty, issues related to safety around the educational institute, and the “lack of relevance of school to the lives of children” (“Right to Education : Situation around the World.”).

**East Asia** is composed of countries such as China, Hong Kong, Japan, North Korea, and South Korea. Based on the article *Education for Girls in Southeast Asia* by Laurence Bradford, “girls and boys nowadays share equal access to education facilities.” (Bradford). Japan is one of the countries in which there is a minimum difference in the enrollment ratios between male and female students. Since 1986, a law was established that required all citizens to obtain at least 9 years of education in China. Before this law was followed, the majority of students enrolled in school were boys, according to *Girls' Education in China More Accessible Than Ever*.

Asia is a continent that has been working hard towards eliminating the lack of education of women and girls; therefore, throughout the years, the situation has improved and is changing in a positive manner.

In **Europe**, the European Union (EU) members work hard towards education in both girls and boys and they have created a law in which gender equality is guaranteed. This, however, does not assure that all girls attend school; since, according to the infographic *Women and Education in the EU* by the European Parliament, “inequalities persist because of the educational choices that girls make.” (European Parliament). It has been proved that the differences between males and females are not as noticeable to affect the educational



development of both genders. This proves that girls can succeed academically as well as boys if they are given the chance to study a complete educational career.

Like all of the other continents, **Oceania** also suffers the problem of girls with no education; however, the government of Australia is already working and doing its best to solve the issue. The government is already starting to build schools and different concepts to improve both boys and girls education. Unlike many other nations, many countries in Oceania are working to improve the statistics and percentages of girls with no education in their countries.

### **Conclusion:**

Women's education is vital for the future of developing countries. There are essential findings that are important for the understanding of women's education. Although some are positive and some negative, these are key to the current issue. Since the year 2000, 41 million girls that could not attend school have been enrolled in one; however, there are still about 131 million girls that remain with no access to an education. This fact demonstrates the changes that have been made in our world related to education for women. These are not significant enough to grant all the women in the world education since, 15 million girls of primary-school age, half of them in sub-Saharan Africa, will never enter a classroom if there are no changes made. This is a call for action for the whole world to start making changes towards the better future of women who do not have access to education. There are many reasons as to why not enough women have an education; this does not and cannot stop people from achieving the goal which is for every girl in the world to have an opportunity of receiving an education.

There are many countries in the world that suffer the lack of education of the female gender daily. Even if it has been an issue for more than 200 years, the world has not been able to solve it completely. Luckily, in the past 25 years, there have been more and more girls and women receiving the gift of education and the chances for a brighter and better future. UNICEF and CSW have been a key component for this.

### **Questions to Reflect on:**

What is the relationship between developing countries and the lack of women's education?

Why are women constantly affected in global issues?

How will the solutions proposed help fight the current problem?

Will this issue ever be permanently erased?

How does gender equality have to do with this issue?

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