

# Research Report

# MUNISH '12



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**Forum:** General Assembly Third Committee

**Issue:** Dealing with the gender disparity in education

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## Introduction

She could be the next president of her country – if only she could read or write. Everybody: whatever religion, culture, ethnic group or gender they belong to, should have a right to education. Education is one of the most important keys to a prosperous and promising future. A future in which one can take care of himself and the people around him. Such as having a family and a place to live. Education gives one the means to create that future. By means of education the chances of getting a proper job (a proper job is defined under a job that follows the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) are more promising. Also, young people who have completed primary education are less than half as likely to contract HIV as those missing an education. Universal primary education would prevent 700,000 cases of HIV each year, according to Oxfam. Unfortunately, in this world a right to education does not apply to everybody. Currently, an estimated one hundred and fifteen million primary school-age children are out of school according to a cooperative investigation by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and UNICEF. A majority of school children consist of girls. The figure below will give a clear view of the education distribution from different areas around the world.

Youth (15–24 years) literacy rate (%)	Number per 100 population		Pre-primary school participation		Primary school participation				Secondary school	
			Gross enrolment ratio (%)	Gross enrolment ratio (%)	Net enrolment ratio (%)	Net attendance ratio (%)	Survival rate to last primary grade (%)		Net enrolment ratio (%)	
			2007–2010*	2007–2010*	2007–2010*	2005–2010*	2006–2009* admin.	2005–2010* survey	2007–2010*	
2005–2010*	2010		2007–2010*	2007–2010*	2007–2010*	2005–2010*	2006–2009* admin.	2005–2010* survey	2007–2010*	
	mobile	Internet								

### SUMMARY INDICATORS\*

Africa	79	70	53	13	19	18	104	96	80	77	70	67	63	87	36	30
Sub-Saharan Africa	77	67	45	10	18	17	104	95	78	74	67	65	61	86	30	24
Eastern and Southern Africa	79	72	42	8	22	21	114	108	87	87	70	70	51	82	32	26
West and Central Africa	73	61	48	13	15	13	97	85	70	63	66	61	68	90	29	20
Middle East and North Africa	93	87	90	22	23	22	101	94	90	85	83	78	90	92	65	58
Asia	92	86	67	20	48	48	112	109	–	–	86**	83**	–	93**	63	48
South Asia	85	72	59	8	47	47	–	–	–	–	83	79	–	93	–	–
East Asia and Pacific	99	99	74	30	50	50	110	112	–	–	96**	96**	79**	–	66	68
Latin America and Caribbean	97	97	98	34	69	69	119	115	95	95	93	93	88	–	71	76
CEE/CIS	99	99	124	36	55	54	99	98	94	93	92	92	96	–	82	81
Industrialized countries	100	100	106	76	81	80	102	102	96	97	–	–	–	–	90	92
Developing countries	81	75	70	21	41	41	110	105	80	78	81**	79**	79**	81**	51	40

Based on the education indicators such as NER, the gender gap does not look that big. Based on the Youth literacy rate, a huge difference between the males and females can be recognized,

especially in Africa, South Asia and developing countries. This committee should focus on finding possible solutions to reduce the amount of illiterate females, keeping these statistics in mind.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Net Enrolment Rate/Ratio (NER)

An indicator used in the education sector which determines the number of children of official primary school age within a country who are enrolled in primary education as a percentage of the total children of the official school age population.

For example: In country 'X' there are a million children aged 5 to 12 years old (primary age). In country 'X' two hundred thousand children aged 5 to 12 years old attend primary school. The net enrollment rate here is 20%.

### Gross Enrolment Rate/Ratio (GER)

An indicator used in the education sector which determines the number of children within a country who are enrolled in any educational level displays it as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to this level of education.

For example: In country 'X' there are a million children aged 5 to 12 years old (primary age). In country 'X' three hundred thousand children attend to primary school, irrespective of age. In this nation the Gross Enrolment Rate will be 30%.

### Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

In September 2010, 193 United Nations member states and at least 23 international organizations agreed to achieve eight international goals by 2015, also known as the Millennium Development Goals, to reduce poverty in different forms around the world.

## General Overview

### *The Universal Human Rights Declaration - Article 26*

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Education plays an unbelievably big part in a human's future and is a basic and inherent right that cannot be forcefully stripped away from an individual. Everyone is entitled to a free quality basic education. This sentiment has been reflected and used by World leaders in drafting a section of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that strives for universal primary education by the year of 2015. In particular Goal 2 – Achieve universal primary education – and Goal 3 – Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women – are momentous for this issue. The Declaration also proposes that to achieve these goals, wealthier countries should provide direct support to developing countries in the form of aid, trade, debt relief and investment.

The gender gap in education has various causes. To start with, education in general is an issue to focus on for developing countries. Extreme poverty causes poor educational facilities and headway, leading back to the problem of an unstable economy being the obstacle for compulsory education. Parents, who are not financially well off, need their children to work and earn an income for the family (thereby escalating the problem of both child labour as lack of child education). Now that it has become known that an education is commonly obliged for a wealthier future, parents conclude it is best for their sons to attend school. This way they will be trained to find a job. On account of this bias, the gender gap is created. Daughters are ought to stay at home to provide the family and surrounding people of their needs, and to take care of the house. Their future is already laid out: making themselves available for men by mastering the skills of everything related to the housework and relatives. Additionally, if it were possible for parents to survive without the contributions of their children, there is a great chance of school fees and other user payments being too heavy burdens on them, which will make it unable for them to afford sending all of their children to school.

Guaranteeing education would kill two birds in one stroke – the right to education will be fulfilled, and child labour would be greatly mitigated. Also, keep in mind that the entire society is affected by the lack of education. A child with no education will not contribute to the financial situation of the nation, which means the nation will maintain its current financial situation. Therefore, solutions to improve this issue should be found urgently.

## **Major Parties Involved and Their Views**

### **United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)**

UNICEF is the driving force that helps build a world where the rights of every child are realized. UNICEF was created with the aim to work with others to overcome the obstacles that poverty, violence, disease and discrimination place in a child's path. An example of an obstacle is a lack of access to education; a right for every child living on this planet and a main factor in this

issue. Education is an important subject for UNICEF, especially the girl's aspect of the issue. That's why they promote girls' education in a big way – ensuring that they complete primary education as a minimum – because they believe it benefits all children, both girls and boys. Girls who are educated grow up to become better thinkers, better citizens, and better parents to their own children.

## United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)

UNGEI is a partnership of organizations dedicated to promoting girls' education, driven by the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) – MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education with the target to ensure that by 2015 all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling, and by MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women with the target to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education and at all levels by 2015. Achieving those goals, in particular focusing on girls' rights to education.

## India

Despite the fact that the economic situation in India has made a huge improvement over the last few years, (with a difference of fourteen percent) India is still one of the nations with the most dramatic gender gaps. Gender disparity in education is an issue that India should pay more attention to and put more effort into.

## Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
September 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2010	The launch of the Millennium Development Goals Adoption of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and
December 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	Training
January 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2015	End of the Millennium Development Goals

## UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

On December 19<sup>th</sup> 2011, the United Nations adopted the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training and invited governments, agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to support the Declaration and to promote universal respect. The Declaration does not simply specify what one should learn about human rights, but also how and why one should learn about them. Furthermore, the adoption of this new Declaration offers educators and policy makers an occasion to reassess national policies and priorities in the light of international standards. In particular Article 5 is related to this issue:

*Article 5:*

1. Human rights education and training, whether provided by public or private actors, should be based on the principles of equality, particularly between girls and boys and between women and men, human dignity, inclusion and non-discrimination.
  - United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, 19 December 2011 **(A/RES/66/137)**

## **Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue**

The issue of gender disparity in education is not a recent one, providing every single human the basic quality education that one needs is a mission that is been wanting to be achieved for several decades. Setting two of the Millennium Development Goals regarded on education, which a 193 United Nations member states agreed on, was a big improvement for this issue. Because of the MDGs, currently in all but two regions, primary enrolment is at least 90 percent. Also the MDGs were adopted as framework for international development cooperation by governments of developing countries, international community, the private sector, the civil society and certain Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in both developed and developing countries. Although it was thanks to the MDG that made this happen, the MDG report has stated that it will not be able to accomplish the goals set on 2015.

After the announcement and agreement of the MDGs, several countries have shown interest in supporting development countries. The actions that have been taken by countries for the universal right to education are as follows:

- The United Kingdom announced it would give an extra US\$15 billion in aid to education over the next decade.
- The European Commission pledged US\$76 million to the Fast Track Initiative (FTI); an initiative that coordinates such donations for education to poor countries and in turn strengthens and develops plans to initiate sound educational systems.
- Russia pledged US\$7 million to FTI, the first initiative Russia has taken in terms of financing in universal education.
- Donors, such as the Netherlands and Norway, have also made large contributions

## **Possible Solutions**

The gender disparity in education is playing a large role especially in developing countries. Due to the lack of money, parents need their children to earn an income otherwise the parents are not able to provide their children of school enrolment. Supporting developing countries by funding

them would be a great way of tackling the problem. This financial support could be provided by More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs). By founding a fund directed to the education problem girls regarded MEDCs are able to contribute the Low Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) and contribute to solving this issue. Many countries have shown their sympathy already and promised to give them support. However, it often happens that after the promises have been made, nothing else happens. The board of the fund should make sure that countries maintain their support.

Apart from a fund for the MEDCs to show their support, a fund could be built for the citizens in MEDCs. Nations all around the world could contribute to girls lacking of education. This fund could be promoted by various methods, such as, but not limited to: television- and radio commercials, advertisements in newspapers, magazines, on transport vehicles, flyers and parades. The promoting of this fund should aim on the benefits of girls' education and talking the public out of the idea and traditional ways of girls working and not being educated.

A lot of development countries suffer from a corrupt government. Due to the corruption, the possibility exists that the aim of monetary aid will not be fully accomplished. To prevent this from happening, the fund should have a board of for example: financial managers and lawyers to keep note of the use of the financial help.

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## Appendix or Appendices

- i. [http://ces.univ-paris1.fr/membre/Poncet/Master2/Refpaper/Eliseeva\\_ref\\_paper.pdf](http://ces.univ-paris1.fr/membre/Poncet/Master2/Refpaper/Eliseeva_ref_paper.pdf)
- ii. <http://www.unicef.org/sowc2012/pdfs/SOWC-2012-TABLE-5-EDUCATION.pdf>
- iii. <http://www.unwomen.org/>
- iv. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/educationsgendergap>