

# The education



of girls and



women



Towards a global framework for action



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## Abbreviations

ABEL	Advancing Basic Education and Literacy
APPEAL	Asia Pacific Programme for Education for All
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CRESALC	Regional Centre for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
EFA	Education for All
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
GNP	Gross National Product
ICASE	International Council for Associations for Science Education
IDA	International Development Association
IGO	Inter-Governmental Organization
ILO	International Labour Organization
JSS	Junior Secondary School
LDC	Least Developed Country
LYA	Latest Year Available
MASTEP	Malawi Special Teacher Education Programme
MENARO	Middle East and North Africa Regional Office
MINEDARAB	Ministers of Education and Ministers of Economic Planning in Arab States
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WHO	World Health Organization
WID	Women in Development
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

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# Message

As the twentieth century draws to a close it is appropriate that a review be carried out of what has already been done to ensure the advancement of women and girls throughout the world and to consider what steps need to be taken to remove the obstacles that still stand in the way of further progress.

Decades ago the status of women in many countries was very different from what it is today. Women were denied the right to vote in parliamentary elections and very few of them had access to education, let alone to higher education. Many changes have been brought about in the intervening years. In large measure these are due to education. Governments in all parts of the world are now firmly committed in principle to the improvement and expansion of educational services for girls and women.

While some satisfaction can be felt at the progress made there must also be considerable disquiet that it has been so painfully slow. It must be frankly acknowledged that universal education and its benefits for girls and women have been confined mainly to the countries of the richer, industrialized nations. For the millions of impoverished women in large areas of the globe there has been little or no improvement at all; if anything, the deprivation is greater than ever because of rapid population growth and the failure of governments and international agencies to give priority to basic education services for girls and women. In nearly all societies, poor women are denied access to the essential learning required to help liberate them and their children from poverty.

The priority for the immediate future is to find ways of providing good quality education for the millions of marginalized women in all parts of the world.

This is the time, therefore, to express concern about the failure to meet the many commitments made over the years to provide more education for girls and women. Commitments which are not backed by appropriate plans, resources and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation are of little worth. There is an urgent need to move forward from rhetoric to achievement and to ensure that when support is declared for girls' and women's education, positive steps are taken to reach the goals set and to ensure that promises are kept.

Many reasons are given for the failure to provide educational services for girls and women. Foremost among them are the financial and material constraints which prevent action from being taken. But there is ample evidence to show that, where the resolution and determination exist, both in the educational system and the wider political and economic environment, seemingly insurmountable obstacles can be overcome. The money spent freely on the purchase of weapons of destruction and wars, for example, would be better used for the creation of educational services for women. Our efforts to involve women more closely in the development process must be carefully reviewed, evaluated and intensified.

Teachers have an important part to play in empowering girls and women through education. They have a duty to look at their teaching

approaches and learning aids critically and to consider whether they meet the learning needs of girls. Teachers should be the agents of change, but it is also certain that the improvement of educational opportunities for girls and women is not the exclusive responsibility of teachers and governments. It is also the task of parents, family members, community leaders, political representatives, heads of state, government officials, writers, artists, media and new technology specialists, voluntary organizations, NGOs, bankers and business men and many others; all of them should take part in exercises designed to promote the education of women.

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Today new ways are open to educational institutions for providing increased educational opportunities for women and which allow them to combine child-bearing and family responsibilities with progress in education and personal development. The adaptation of new technologies to the provision of education and more flexible approaches to school administration and management should be considered, and their cost-effectiveness should be reviewed and their relevance for the learners examined. Educational technology has made advances and there is evidence to show that it can be used in areas where there is a demand for education and where opportunities are lacking. New means of communication have opened up avenues for empowering women through informal education programmes and information services which influence their lives. However, the benefits of modern technologies are elusive in regions where technology is underdeveloped and where communication systems are poor and ineffective.

The main responsibility for providing equal education opportunities for girls and

women rests principally with women themselves. Therefore, there must be more dialogue and consultation with them to enable their voices to be heard. The assumption that illiterate girls and women do not know what they need to learn is erroneous. Disadvantaged women can, and do, participate actively in the planning and implementation of their education programmes. There is room for less condescension in the relations between educated women and their underprivileged compatriots. In brief, programmes should be drawn up WITH women and not FOR them.

We must face the future together with greater openness and honesty regarding girls' and women's education. It is time to increase the provision of educational opportunities for them so that they meet their needs adequately. In this respect the concerted and co-ordinated approach of the United Nations system and other donors could provide essential support for national efforts. Similarly good quality disaggregated data will assist in the public accounting and monitoring of achievements.

This document gives an overview of what has been achieved, describes the problems which remain and indicates the priorities for future development in the improvement and expansion of educational opportunities for girls and women. Strategies are suggested which are based on a variety of approaches used in all regions of the world. The projects described are, for the most part, on a small scale but none the less they have provided much-needed experience. It is hoped that this document will be perceived as a genuine call to action and will provide some help and suggestions for finding a way forward in the twenty-first century.

Federico Mayor,  
Director-General of UNESCO

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# Foreword

The problem of how best to provide access to educational opportunities for girls and women is one of considerable complexity and difficulty. It is affected by a variety of social, economic and cultural factors, by rapid population growth and by such occurrences as structural adjustment programmes, recession, unemployment and human and natural disasters. The differences between the progress made in the wealthy, industrialized countries and in the poorer regions of the world are great and the gap between them continues to grow.

The UNESCO General Conference of October 1993 recommended that a global framework for action in support of basic education for girls and women be prepared for presentation to the 1995 United Nations Conference on Women.

The purpose of this document, therefore, is to draw attention to the situation regarding the educational opportunities available to women in all parts of the world and to furnish information on projects and programmes which have been successfully implemented in an effort to reverse the negative trends of the past. These concrete examples also indicate the steps that might be taken to bring about future progress.

The information presented in this document was obtained from various sources: the reports of the preparatory regional meetings for the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, research studies on girls' and women's education, documents prepared by multilateral and bilateral agencies and consultations with women in decision-making positions.

It is for this reason that the perspectives for women's education have been placed in a regional context and in country groupings such as that of the least developed countries (LDCs). In this document it is recognized that within the separate regions there are considerable differences in what has been achieved.

Few of the approaches adopted so far have been on a national scale, but they do give examples of what can be done to improve the situation. Some are intended to increase the learning opportunities for girls in schools and institutions of higher education. Others, designed to reach out-of-school girls and women, focus on teaching literacy and numeracy and providing skills training courses related to income-generating activities and improved living standards.

The various projects described in this document illustrate how governments, aid agencies, non-governmental organizations, voluntary services and families – indeed all members of society – can contribute to the provision of learning opportunities for girls and women. This document should, therefore, be of assistance to all those who are genuinely concerned to promote the education of girls and women and to remove the existing injustices in this regard.

It is also clear that there must, in future, be a more careful monitoring of programmes to ensure that commitments are honoured and that inertia and neglect no longer prevail. A careful and regular evaluation of activities is essential to ensure that there is no lowering of



standards in the provision of education for girls and women and that wastage in the use of resources is eliminated or substantially reduced. This evaluation must extend not only to the learners themselves but also to those who administer and provide educational services. It is in this way that the goals will be reached. To this end a mid-decade review of progress subsequent to the Fourth World Conference on Women would be desirable at the world level.

The statistics given in this document have been obtained from The UNESCO Statistical Yearbook on Education and from UNDP Human Development Reports. The data provided give some indication of the overall trends in girls' and women's education. On the evidence obtained from these figures, from the recommendations made by the various international and regional meetings and the results of

project activities, it has been possible to identify strategies for the development of educational opportunities for girls and women.

It is now essential for all countries of the world to advance from discussion and speculation to action. It is hoped that this document will help them to do this and to promote more co-ordinated and intensive efforts in the interests not only of women themselves but of all human development. Those best qualified to promote the development of educational services for girls and women are the women themselves. There is ample evidence that they are ready and willing to do this.

Colin N. Power  
Assistant Director-General  
Education Sector  
UNESCO

# Global trends and developments

It cannot be denied that significant progress has been made in the advancement of women in many regions of the world. There are growing numbers of women who are Heads of State, Prime Ministers, heads of international agencies, judges and senior managers. Much of this progress is due to an increase in the educational opportunities available to women and to a growing recognition of the role of women in development. The time is appropriate, therefore, to consider the steps that have already been taken to promote the education of women, to review the obstacles that stand in the way of further progress and to indicate the concrete action that now needs to be taken.

## International commitment to education for girls and women

At the World Conference on Education for All, held at Jomtien, Thailand, in March 1990, education for all was declared to be one of the main development goals of the decade. One hundred and fifty-three countries signed a declaration stating that: *The most urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of education for girls and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their participation. All gender stereotyping in education should be eliminated.* The participants in the conference stressed the importance of *an expanded vision of education* which included five elements: the universalization of access to learning; the promotion of equity; an

emphasis on learning; an improvement in the learning environment and a strengthening of partnerships in the interests of education.

Since the milestone reached at Jomtien, girls' and women's education has retained its prominence in international fora. The World Summit on Children held in New York, later in 1990, also stressed that education for girls was essential for improving the status of women and for enabling them to participate in development. At the Pan-African Conference on the Education of Girls held in Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso in April 1993, which was the largest regional gathering to be held on the subject, representatives of forty-five African countries agreed to adopt a series of measures to reduce the gender disparities in education which existed in their countries. The year 1993 ended with the Education for All Summit of the Nine High-Population Countries where their leaders, representing more than half the world's population and seventy per cent of its illiterates, reaffirmed their commitment to the declarations of the Jomtien Conference and the World Summit on Children. They unanimously agreed that *the education and empowerment of girls and women are important goals in themselves and key factors in contributing to social development.*

The key role of education in assisting women to make informed choices and to gain control over themselves and their destiny was also emphasized at the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in September, 1994. Similarly, The World Summit for Social Development,



nities more women than men live in a state of complete deprivation. A failure to reverse this imbalance is a clear denial of human rights and dignity, and results in growing poverty, mass migration, marginalization and rapid growth in population. An equitable society cannot be developed without the participation of women. In both developed and developing countries, the education of women is closely linked to human security, political involvement and a society built upon mutual respect, social justice, equality and a desire for peace. The education of girls and women is essential for the achievement of education for all and for escape from the cycle of illiteracy and poverty.

### The social and economic benefits of education for girls and women

held in Copenhagen in March 1995, stressed the fact that the empowerment of women through lifelong education programmes was an essential factor in social development and integration.

At a UNESCO-sponsored international experts' meeting on the Promotion of Equal Access of Girls and Women to Technical and Vocational Education, held in Seoul, the Republic of South Korea, in July 1995, fourteen member states of UNESCO adopted a statement demanding action to promote technical and vocational education for girls and women as an essential means of contributing to economic and social development. Particular emphasis was given to the learning needs of deprived groups of women such as the disabled, refugees, immigrants, single parents and minority groups.

### Girls and women and human development

According to the UNDP human development index for 1994, female human development is only 60 per cent that of males. In rural commu-

Although it is no longer a matter for debate whether girls and women should be educated some reference to the gains to be made is required. Educated mothers are more likely to adopt desirable health and nutritional practices than those who are uneducated. Girls who have received a minimum of eight years of schooling will probably marry later, have fewer children and will be more willing to use contraceptives. Educated mothers are also more likely to send their own daughters to school and to ensure that they benefit socially and economically from the education they receive. The evidence obtained from studies suggests that each additional year of schooling results in a 5 to 10 per cent reduction in infant mortality. In Brazil illiterate women have an average of 6.5 children, whereas those who have had secondary education have only 2.5 children. In the southern Indian state of Kerala, where total literacy has been achieved, it is noteworthy that it also has both the lowest infant mortality rate in the entire developing world and the lowest fertility rate in India.

Statistics show that there is a relationship between women's education and economic gains. Research indicates that each additional

year that a girl remains at school can result in a 10 to 20 per cent increase in earnings. Figures show that in Africa a significant correlation exists between secondary enrolments in 1970 and the subsequent employment of females in industry in 1990/1992. In East Asia and the Pacific region economic progress in the 1980s and 1990s resulted not only in higher incomes but also in significant increases in the enrolments of girls in schools and in their longer life expectancy. But in sub-Saharan Africa no such improvements have been recorded.

### **Progress to date**

The impact of both The United Nations Decade for Women, that ended in The Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985 and the movement towards education for all which was launched at Jomtien in 1990, has

been evident. The inadequacy of educational services for girls and women is no longer seen as a problem related only to women, but is regarded instead as a matter which affects society as a whole and one which is of major importance for overall development. Women have influenced some development programmes and it has become clear that their interests must always be taken into account whenever such programmes are implemented.

There is a growing appreciation of the importance of early childhood care and education in the education of girls and women. This not only ensures that learning opportunities are made available for very young girls and boys but it frees older girls and women (who have traditionally been responsible for looking after the young), from their child-minding duties. Despite the recognition of the importance of early child care and education such services are still very limited in most countries. In recent



years, particularly in the context of education for all initiatives, early childhood programmes have gained momentum. Day-care facilities have been informally organized by communities. The European Union in the Framework for Equal Opportunities for Men and Women (1991-1995) has given priority to the provision of childcare services in order to increase women's education and labour opportunities. More governments are including early childhood care and education in their priority plans and programmes. A new emphasis on the role of parents and care-givers has led to education programmes for parents using the media and other channels. NGOs and voluntary agencies have been instrumental in establishing day-care facilities with the participation of communities.

Some countries have involved women more closely in social, economic and political activities. In Norway, 47 per cent of the cabinet Ministers are women. In Sweden 50 per cent of the elected representatives in parliament are women. Malaysia appointed a woman Minister of Education for the first time and Pakistan has a quota of five per cent women in all govern-



ment services and has recently appointed women judges in a number of high courts. India has decided to reserve 30 per cent of all elected seats at the local level for women.

Although national structures for the advancement of women often lack institutional power within government bureaucracies, they have been established in many countries. Some have established special ministries for women and constitutions have been amended in recognition of the principle of gender equality. In Nigeria a National Commission for Women has been set up and Women's Education Units have been established in all the state ministries of education. Approaches of both state and non-governmental organizations have shown a greater awareness of women's needs. NGOs working in specialized fields such as agriculture, human rights and skills training have promoted women's education. They have played an active role in developing and implementing programmes which increase girls' access to schooling, in providing literacy and skills training and in helping to raise the standards of living of women by showing them how they can meet their basic needs more effectively. Governments have become more receptive to NGOs as genuine partners in outreach programmes for education, particularly in so far as they attract girls to and retain them in schools. In several countries advocacy groups have been able to influence the formulation of educational policies which favour girls and women. In Africa, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), which was set up by women ministers of education and leading educationalists in 1991, is an example of the regional leadership that has been given to activities related to girls' and women's education and empowerment.

In the past five years there has been further evidence of the commitment of governments, international agencies and NGOs to the promotion of the education of girls and women. Governments have reduced the costs of schooling for families as an incentive to sending girls to school. More women teachers have been recruited and literacy instruction and skills

## **Box 1.1 Latin America and the Caribbean**

### **Management training for women academics and administrators 1992-1995**

The aim of the project is to provide management training in the region for women university staff which will:

- (a) increase the number of women academics and administrators in the region involved in decision-making activities in institutions of higher education;
- (b) make institutional directors and managers aware of the importance of gender equity;
- (c) improve the quality and efficiency of higher education management in the region.

The programme is implemented by means of the exchange of information through media networks, the distribution of documentation, training seminars on matters related to visiting professors and internships, joint research programmes related to women and their role in decision-making, to the leadership roles of women and to the part they play in social and economic development.

The project is expected to promote:

- (a) the increased participation of women in decision-making in the region's universities;
- (b) a greater awareness and understanding of gender issues in the field of higher education;
- (c) training and research programmes and information exchanges for women in higher education institutions which will enable them to improve their competence;
- (d) improvement in the quality and relevance of university courses in the region by providing women staff with better management skills.

The project is assisted by: UNESCO, The Inter-American Association for Higher Education, The Canadian International Development Agency, The University of Manitoba, La Universidad Interamericano de Puerto Rico, La Universidad de los Andes, The American Council of Education,

Source: UNESCO 1994.

training programmes related to income earning activities have been established. Free tuition for girls has been provided in Bangladesh, China and Nepal. UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNFPA and ILO have all given prominence in their programmes to the elimination of sex discrimination, to increased opportunities for girls and women in education and training and to women's participation in community organizations and activities. The World Bank has given priority to the education of girls and women and funding for this purpose has been substantially increased.

In many countries progress has been made towards a gradual decentralization of authority from the central government to

regions, districts, towns and villages. While this devolution of control can result in an increase in disparities between men and women, particularly when management skills and adequate supervision are lacking, there is nevertheless considerable potential for local organizations to work effectively in the interests of women by encouraging their participation in community activities. Nigeria and Ethiopia have implemented measures which decentralize the administration of education and give greater responsibility to local communities for the planning and management of programmes. In India legal recognition has been given to the decentralization of educational administration to the district level and to the inclusion of a

high percentage of women among those responsible for education.

In all these efforts to improve the education of girls and women, few countries have attempted gender training for educators. In fact, there is an urgent need to define more precisely the concept of gender sensitivity and how it can, and should, be applied in the various parts of an educational system.

### Progress towards equity in enrolments

Generally girls' enrolments have increased throughout the world. Nevertheless the gender gap in many countries remains virtually unchanged. Between 1985 and 1992 the global female enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions increased by 14.5 per cent from 405.6 million to 464.1 million. This reflects an annual growth rate of 2 per cent over the seven year period compared with an annual growth rate of 1.3 per cent for boys over the

same period. At the primary level of education, the proportion of girls enrolled in 1992 was 46 per cent of the total world enrolment and marked an increase from 45 per cent in 1985. In developing countries, girls' enrolments in primary institutions grew from 209.8 million to 235.0 million over the same period, an enrolment growth rate of 1.7 per cent (Table 1.1). Estimates show that over 129 million school-age children are out of school and of this number 77.5 million are girls. At the present growth rate it would take seventeen years for all of them to be enrolled in schools. Considering the high increases in population, the present enrolment rates are inadequate to reach the goal of education for all girls. The gap in enrolment ratios between boys and girls has remained greater in Africa, Asia and the Arab states than in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Although it is well known that secondary education has a major impact on the ability of girls to earn income, it is at this level of education that they have only limited access to schooling, particularly in rural communities.

**Table 1.1 Enrolments in education programmes by level 1985 and 1992 (millions)**

Regions of the world		Total Enrolment			Female Enrolment			% Female			
		MF	1st level	2nd level	3rd level	1st level	2nd level	3rd level	1st level	2nd level	3rd level
World total	1985	909.7	581.1	274.8	53.7	263.2	118.8	23.67	45	43	44
	1992	1016.0	626.8	318.6	70.5	290.3	141.9	31.8	46	45	45
Developing Countries	1985	676.8	471.5	182.6	22.7	209.8	73.2	8.3	44	40	37
	1992	770.6	514.6	224.2	31.84	235.0	94.8	12.1	46	42	38
Africa(excluding Arab states)	1985	67.4	54.94	11.62	0.83	24.6	4.7	0.2	45	40	25
	1992	84.2	66.4	16.2	1.5	30.2	7.4	0.5	45	46	32
Asia(excluding Arab states)	1985	500.3	334.9	149.6	15.8	147.3	58.7	5.3	44	39	34
	1992	558.1	354.5	180.6	23.0	161.0	74.5	8.2	45	41	36
Arab States	1985	39.3	25.9	11.5	2.0	10.9	4.5	0.6	42	40	33
	1992	49.7	31.4	15.7	2.7	13.8	6.7	1.0	44	43	37

1st level - primary; 2nd level - secondary; 3rd level - tertiary.



The kind of education that is provided and the subject choices girls make, are also affected by traditional attitudes regarding the role of women in society and the job opportunities open to them. In the developing countries the proportion of girls enrolled at the secondary level rose by 2 per cent, from 40 to 42 per cent, between the years 1985 and 1992. This global figure, however, does not reveal the inequalities that exist in countries where the proportion of girls enrolled in secondary institutions is particularly low. It is, however, interesting to note that in Africa the gap between boys' and girls' enrolments at the secondary level (3.7 percentage points), is substantially less than that at the primary level (12.8 percentage points), while for Asia the gender gap (14.1 percentage points) at the primary level is slightly higher than that at the secondary level (13.2 percentage points). Figures 1.1 and 1.2.

Higher education plays an important part in the advancement of women. It prepares women for leadership tasks and for becoming role models for girls (Box 1.1). But early marriage, family duties, little or no guidance and counselling and the difficulties faced in managing both personal and professional responsibilities, often discourage women from continuing their education at a higher level. When they do enter universities they tend to follow courses in the arts and social sciences rather than in mathematics and science and technology. Improvements in the enrolments of women in universities have been made in the last twenty years, though this may partly be due to a redefinition of higher education to include professional courses in nursing and teach-

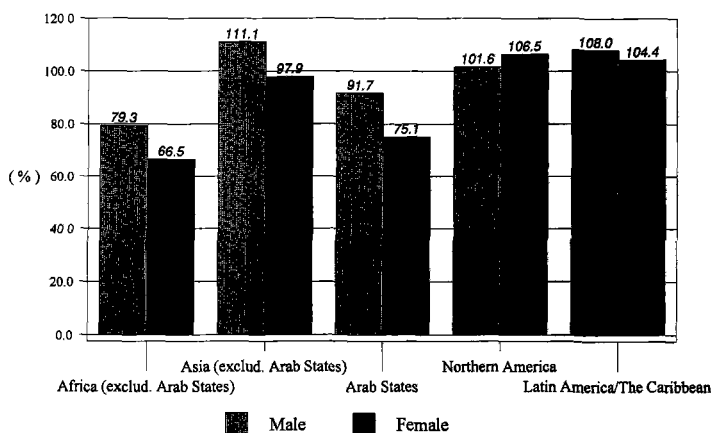
ing. It is again in the developing countries where the enrolment of women, particularly in the scientific and technological fields, lags behind that of men and where the number of women studying scientific disciplines such as the natural sciences and engineering remains small.

### Increasing resources for education

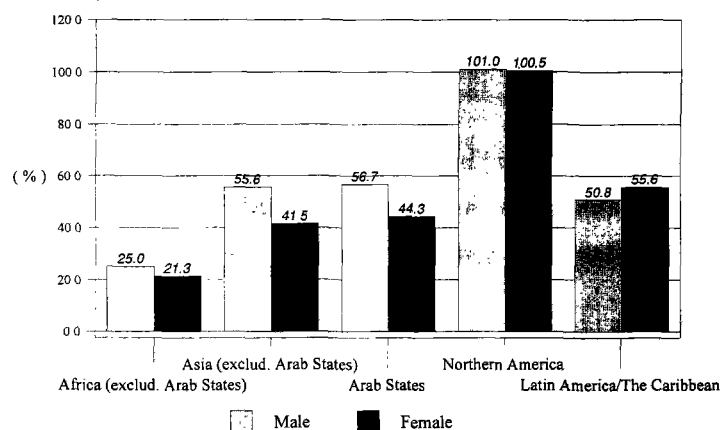
In those countries where governments have increased their budgetary allocations for education, there have been significant benefits as far as girls' enrolments are concerned. But even then, the gender gap has not necessarily been reduced.

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**Fig. 1.1 Gross enrolment ratios by regions (First level - 1992 or LYA)**



**Fig. 1.2 Gross enrolment ratios by regions (Second level - 1992 or LYA)**





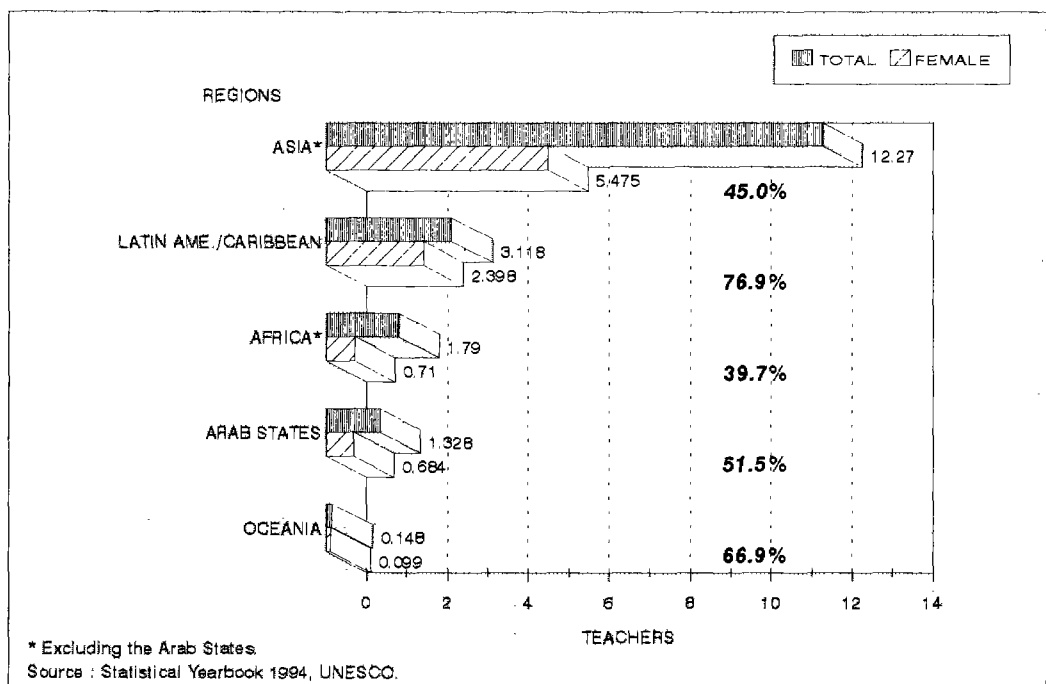
Where human, financial and material resources for education are in short supply, then careful choices have to be made regarding their use. Wastage is still being incurred through inefficiencies in educational planning and administration and weaknesses in monitoring and accountability. These inadequacies prevent resources from being used in the best interests of girls. Considering that for most girls primary education is terminal, that for some schooling ends in less than two years and that for others there are no school places at all, the high level of wastage in education is a major handicap to their advancement. Where this state of affairs exists, strong measures must be taken by ministries of education to raise the level of efficiency of their educational systems.

Nearly all donors have increased their financial contributions to activities directed towards improving girls' and women's education; but for the most part these have been only for experiments and pilot projects. Many more resources are needed to support national programmes which will improve the educational services available for girls and women.

### Can teachers make a difference?

Research has shown that, in developing countries, girls tend to stay longer at school when they are taught by a higher proportion of women teachers. Nevertheless women teachers are themselves products of the society in which they live and although they may be more acceptable to the girls in their classes they may not always be of help in changing attitudes with regard to women. Relations between women teachers and students in a co-educational class may still favour boys, and girls may be left with the feeling that they are inferior in ability to their male counterparts, particularly in mathematics and science. Figures 1.1 and 1.3 show that both the percentage of women teachers in primary education and girls' enrolment ratios were lowest in Africa. Extremely low percentages of women teachers are to be found in Burkina Faso (27 per cent), Chad, (6 per cent), Guinea, (23 per cent) and Mauritania, (18 per cent). The dearth of women teachers puts girls at a distinct disadvantage in countries where

**Fig. 1.3 Female teachers in primary education: 1992 (in millions)**

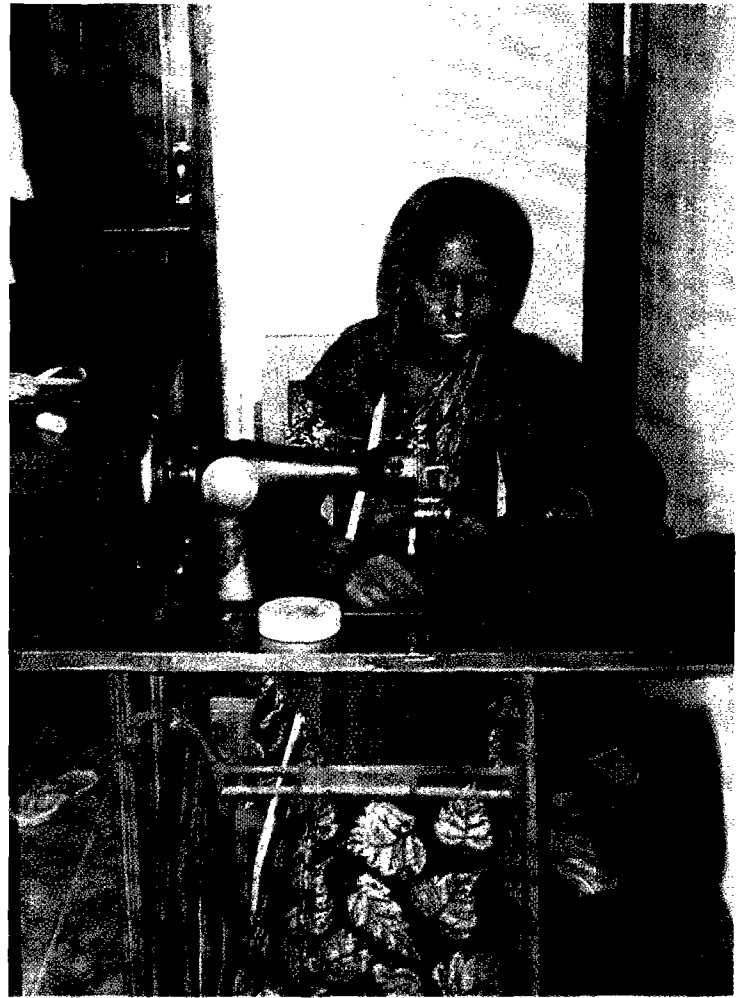


parents prefer their daughters to be taught by women.

Teachers have a major responsibility for changing the values and attitudes of society towards women and girls. The lack of gender-sensitive training for teachers has reduced their capacity to develop in both boys and girls an understanding of the importance of equality in gender relationships and to assume their role as agents of change. The status and remuneration of teachers, particularly those in primary schools, have not been such as to ensure that they shoulder their responsibilities in this regard with the necessary conviction and commitment. All too often teachers are obliged to seek additional employment to make ends meet and this prevents them from carrying out their duties satisfactorily. It must be kept in mind that despite the advances that have been made in educational technology, the teacher is still the main source of instruction and the agent for the development of positive attitudes towards gender equality.

### Literacy - an instrument for human development

It is in the field of literacy that women are most disadvantaged and this in turn has an adverse effect on their overall development. Although literacy rates for women have risen, there is still a wide gap between men and women which is only gradually being closed. Estimates for 1995 show that in developing countries about 38.3 per cent of women are illiterate compared with 8.8 per cent men, but in the least developed countries the figure is higher at 61.9 per cent, compared with 40.5 per cent for men. For the same year, estimated female illiteracy rates were highest in southern Asia where it was 63.4 per cent, followed by the Arab states (55.8 per cent) and sub-Saharan Africa (52.7 per cent). In 1995 the average female illiteracy rates were estimated to be 36.6 per cent in the Asia and Pacific region, 14.5 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean and only 2 per cent in Europe.



*Income-generating activity linked to literacy instruction.*

By the year 2000 the developing countries will account for 98.7 per cent of the world's estimated 881 million illiterates and of this total 558 million or 64 per cent will be women. Included in this estimate are the children who are now of school age and who should attend school but who do not. By the end of the century half of the world's illiterate population will live in South Asia. UNESCO estimates that the number of illiterates is destined to increase in the regions of South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States. The problem will be exacerbated by the fact that girls frequently drop out of school between the ages of 9 and 11 and tend to return to illiteracy. Countries have continued to keep literacy programmes high on their development agenda but many new literates

have relapsed quickly into illiteracy. Educational planners have recognized that the supply of literacy programmes must be matched by the demand for them. The most successful experiences in the education of illiterate women have been those programmes directly linked to income-generating activities and which the women themselves perceive as worthwhile.

### Refugees and displaced persons - new demands for life-oriented education

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A growing concern throughout the world is the need to provide educational opportunities for the rising numbers of refugees and displaced persons – the majority of whom are women and children. They are the victims of both natural

and human catastrophes resulting from armed conflict, hurricanes, typhoons, earthquakes, floods, tidal waves and drought. One recent UNHCR estimate of the number of people affected by such disasters is approximately 44 million. The emergency relief required for such populations was given as US\$ 3.2 billion in 1994 and is expected to rise to US\$3.5 billion in 1995. When such events occur the demands for assistance are enormous and come from many sectors – all of which have genuine claims to make. Funds are needed for construction work, water supplies, the provision of food, health services and communications along with many other services such as mine clearance and the restoration of irrigation channels. In such circumstances learning needs are either given low priority or none at all. But that urgent learning needs exist is undeniable.

## **Box 1.2 Afghanistan**

### **Soap opera: New home, new life**

In Afghanistan many of the 5 million refugees from neighbouring countries and thousands of displaced persons have returned to their homes in an attempt to rebuild their lives. But schools have been destroyed, many teachers have left the profession and books and materials have been lost. The BBC, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIFEM, The Red Cross and many other agencies have assisted in the development of a radio soap opera which conveys educational messages through entertainment by means of a family drama called 'New Home, New Life'. The aim is principally to reach girls and women since they are particularly deprived of access to educational services. The programme has had considerable success and one estimate suggests that it is heard by 90 per cent of the population. The broadcasts are produced in the two main languages of the country – Dari and Pashto – and 120 Afghan men and women are employed in the preparation and production of the programmes. A consultative committee with representatives from all development sectors meets regularly to determine the educational messages to be conveyed and there is a permanent evaluation of the impact of programmes. A magazine which recounts the stories of the episodes is printed monthly with coloured cartoons and in language suitable for new literates. Among the educational messages conveyed are those related to mass immunization programmes for young children, mine awareness, income earning possibilities, the advantages of schooling for girls and literacy for women and the need for tolerance and understanding within society. The programmes are also part of a strategy for providing education for all and not merely children of school age. The broadcasts are also listened to outside Afghanistan in other countries which use the same languages.

Source: UNESCO 1995.

Many of the worst affected by disasters are widows with children to support. Special attention also needs to be given to those who have been disabled and the traumatized. In order to survive they will need to know how to provide food and shelter and how to earn an income. They should also be able to prevent disease and must learn what social services and credit facilities are open to them. They require immediate instruction and advice rather than long-term educational services which depend upon school buildings, the planning of curricula, the writing and publication of text-books and the training of teachers. Other means must be found of conveying information and providing instruction as rapidly and effectively as possible. This demands the use of innovative approaches. Special training should be given to instructors of refugees and displaced persons to enable them to be more effective in their work. Close consultation and co-operation with the displaced persons themselves is also necessary if their learning priorities are to be met.

The media can, and should, fulfil the dual role of providing information and education. However, account must also be taken of the fact that while the media can play an important part in conveying information and providing instruction to large numbers of people, they can also be a major cause of conflict when they deliberately or otherwise manipulate and confuse those they address.

### Other factors affecting girls' and women's education

Deteriorating social and economic conditions have encouraged men to seek employment in foreign countries, leaving women as heads of households with little or no income. Large numbers of Asian women who have obtained employment in foreign countries have been the victims of abuse and hardship. The growth in the numbers of young and poorly educated single mothers, with only meagre incomes, only



*Women's cooperative in Senegal*

aggravates the problems of enrolment, attendance and retention of girls in schools. In several regions, and notably in Latin America and parts of Asia, large numbers of women have entered the formal economy where they find they are discriminated against and obliged to accept low income jobs with only minimal security of employment. Some women have organized cooperatives as a means of generating income. In countries now moving from centrally planned to market economies, women have also been badly affected by large-scale unemployment, due to cutbacks in state enterprises and to a corresponding reduction in subsidies available for education, health and welfare services.

It is evident that investment in the education of girls and women is a major pre-requisite for overall human development and for nation building and that, if the negative trends of the past are to be reversed, then effective measures must be taken to provide greater resources for the purpose of ensuring that education is accessible to all. However, other economic hurdles also have to be overcome which cannot be surmounted by education alone. Women in rural communities need access to clean water, to fuel for cooking, to markets for the purchase and sale of produce, irrigation schemes, rural settlements, improved roads and appropriate

technology which reduce their burden of work. In short there is also a need for more integrated development programmes for rural areas and for such programmes to be directed towards poverty eradication.

The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh is an outstanding example of how women can improve their standards of living through the provision of bank credits for income-generating activities. Started by Professor Yunus in 1976 as an experiment to help people in abject poverty, it now reaches over 2 million people, of whom 94 per cent are women. The strength of the Grameen Bank approach lies in the belief that, within an appropriately planned support system, poor people can, and do, solve their own problems. Inherent in the programme is an understanding of the psycho-social aspects of poverty, a factor which has evaded development programmes for decades. The Grameen Bank provides loans to poor people without collateral and uses a group-based approach to the provision of banking services. All its borrowers are members of the Bank. The Grameen Bank experience has raised thousands of women from a state of abject deprivation to one of self-reliance and dignity. In short it has successfully broken the cycle of poverty for many women.

Considerable gains have been made in education (including literacy) and in health and employment opportunities, but there are still many disparities between men and women and women's groups, among others in the least developed countries, tend to fear that with the continuing recession, a commitment to the advancement of girls and women may be waning. In such circumstances the momentum already obtained must be maintained and the process of change continued.

The priority for future assistance still appears to be those girls and women living in poverty and predominantly to be found in rural communities and urban slums. They are not only the most numerous, but they are also the most vulnerable and efforts made on their behalf are most likely to benefit the largest number of people. But action programmes should be designed in consultation with the beneficiaries themselves and in accordance with their real needs and concerns. Only in this way can relevant and worthwhile programmes be established.

*Grameen Bank members' meeting at their centre*



# Regional perspectives

An account of regional trends gives some idea of what has been achieved since the launch of the UN Decade for Women and indicates the many challenges that still have to be faced.

Efforts to improve educational opportunities for girls and women have been successful in varying degrees. The Arab States and the countries of the Sahel have prepared plans of action for improving the education of females. Some countries have given special attention to matters such as adolescent pregnancy and the recruitment of female teachers for the primary schools.

Despite the national and international efforts that have been made to improve the educational situation of girls and women, the high rate of illiteracy among females remains a major obstacle to development in parts of Asia and Africa.

## **Africa**

(excluding the Arab States)

The combination of high population growth, trade imbalances and heavy debt burdens, natural disasters and civil wars, has led to a drop in the value of incomes in a large number of sub-Saharan African countries. While African governments have recognized that the education of girls and women is a priority for social and economic development, the challenge of achieving education for all and ensuring equality of access is enormous. In 1990 girls accounted for 53.8 per cent of the 44 million African children

between the ages of 6 and 11 who were out of school. However, some advances have been made in the net enrolments of girls in primary schools. Between 1985 and 1992 girls' primary enrolments increased by 22.7 per cent, from 24.6 million to 30.2 million, though the proportion of girls increased by only one percentage point from 44 to 45 per cent. But in 1992 only 6 out of the 32 African countries for which data were available had net female enrolment ratios that were equal to or higher than those for boys. Secondary school enrolments for females increased by 58.5 per cent from 4.7 million in 1985 to 7.5 million in 1992. The dramatic increase in secondary education enrolments is indicative of the growing need to progress beyond primary education.

Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia are among the countries in which the enrolment ratios for girls are higher than those for boys. But as in other African countries drop-out rates for girls are higher than those of boys, in both rural and urban communities. Of the 1988 cohort, the proportion of girls reaching the final grade was only 51 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa. The average number of years of schooling for girls was estimated to be less than two years in Guinea and Niger. Many factors contributed to the high drop-out rates and poor enrolments of girls. As in other regions, the social, economic and cultural environment has not encouraged the education of girls and women. In addition the structures, organizations and delivery systems related to education have not always been appropriate for the needs

and aspirations of the girls they were intended to serve.

The wide dispersal of communities in Africa has limited girls' access to schools. Parents fear for the safety of their girls who must walk five or more kilometres to the nearest school. Governments are still searching for affordable strategies to bring good quality education closer to homes. Attempts have been made to use the mass media in countries such as Kenya and Malawi but it has remained a challenge to sustain the technology. One example of an outreach programme is to be found in Mali (Box 2.1).

The number of pregnancies among schoolgirls in Africa has increased. About 18 per cent of the female population between the ages of 15 and 19 gives birth each year, compared with 8 per cent in Latin America and 3 per cent in Asia in the same age group. Although countries such as Burkina Faso and Botswana have

encouraged the continuing education of pregnant schoolgirls by allowing them to remain at school, other countries insist that they drop out of school. The AIDS pandemic also presents a considerable threat to adolescent girls. Throughout the world women contract and die from AIDS at a younger age than men.

The process of modernization, including technological advancement, is bringing about changes in social relationships between men and women and adults and children in African communities. Improvements in global communication have exposed young people to different interpretations of moral standards and values. Simultaneously, the traditional support structure provided by the elders of the communities to guide young people, is weakening and in some cases has disappeared. These factors have contributed to an increase in adolescent pregnancies and to a growing social group called 'street children'.

### **Box 2.1 Mali**

#### **Village schools**

In rural Mali 80 per cent of the children have never attended school. Save the Children (US), therefore, launched a village school programme in 1992. Instruction is given in Bambara, the local language and teachers are recruited from the villages. Schools are built by the villagers themselves with materials provided by Save the Children. The curriculum includes the teaching of life skills related to the daily lives of the children and school terms are adjusted to meet the demands of agriculture. Teachers are paid by the villagers and are trained by Save the Children and the National Pedagogical Institute. The children spend three hours daily in school and the rest of the time are free for other activities related to the local economy and household duties.

One of the major achievements has been the enrolment of girls which is as high as 50 per cent. This was also a condition set by Save the Children for the provision of assistance in the building of the school and in giving support to the community. Special emphasis is given to the recruitment of women teachers who are expected to play a part in improving the status of women in the community. Women teachers are also favoured since they are considered less likely to move away from the rural community to seek employment in towns. However since female literacy in Mali is as low as 5 per cent it has proved difficult to ensure that women make up 50 per cent of the teaching force.

Initially 22 village schools were established and another 50 communities have asked for schools to be opened.

*Source: UNESCO Education for All. INNOV Data Base. Making it work, 4. Jean-Pierre Velis. Les villages font l'école.*

## Box 2.2 Botswana

### Teenage mothers

In Botswana pregnancy is the major cause of girls' drop-outs from junior and senior secondary schools and the rates are 75 per cent and 85 per cent respectively. Regulations demand that pregnant girls leave school and they are only eligible to return twelve months after they have given birth. Most of them, however, fail to return to school because of a lack of awareness that they are able to do so and because of a shortage of places in the schools. The young mothers are then faced with many difficulties since they have not completed their academic studies and lack the vocational and skills training which enable them to earn a living.

The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) set up an Education Centre for Adolescent Women in 1988 in an attempt to assist these young mothers. The centre had two main objectives: (a) to make national decision-makers and communities aware of the problems related to teenage pregnancy, and (b) to show how young mothers could complete their academic studies and also acquire the knowledge and skills which would help them to fulfil their roles as mothers and women.

80 girls have completed the programme since its inception. 80 per cent of them have taken their Junior Secondary School (JSS) examination and more than 50 per cent of them have passed at first or second degree level. A study carried out in 1993 showed that 60 per cent of the young mothers re-entered schools, 10 per cent were employed and 30 per cent remained at home. The family life education provided and the counselling services offered were particularly appreciated by the young women, who developed self-confidence and acquired life skills. Repeated pregnancies among the graduates of the programme are currently at zero per cent. Ways of extending the programme are under consideration.

Source: UNESCO 1994.

Out of concern for the problems of school drop-outs and of adolescent pregnancy in nearly all sub-Saharan African countries, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), organized a ministerial consultation on the theme 'Counting the Cost'. An important outcome of the consultation was a renewed commitment to reduce these problems in African countries. FAWE, with assistance from the international community, has been equally active in the promotion of gender sensitivity in the educational services. A number of eastern and southern African countries has decided to work together to introduce or strengthen their guidance and counselling programmes with a view to assisting the overall development of children and young people, particularly females.

Attempts are being made to attract female teachers to primary education. The Malawi special teacher education programme was one example of a strategy that attracted and retained women in teacher education.

The participation of females in higher education in Africa is the lowest in all the regions of the world. Despite a 37.3 per cent increase in female enrolments in higher education between 1985 and 1991, women account for only 31 per cent of the enrolments at this level, compared with 35 per cent in Asia and 50 per cent in other regions.

The levels of illiteracy in the region have steadily increased since the early 1980s. The number of illiterates is projected to reach 143 million by the year 2000, compared with 126 million in 1980. The female illiteracy rate is



### Box 2.3 Malawi

#### The special teacher education programme (MASTEP) Distance education

The government of Malawi decided to reduce the shortage of primary teachers in 1988 by means of distance education teacher training programmes. These were set up with assistance from UNESCO, UNDP and The World Bank and were designed to train 4,000 additional teachers to work in rural primary schools. The training given was commensurate with that given to full-time students in teacher training institutions who receive two-year courses of instruction. Of the total number of enrolments in the distance education courses 40 per cent were women.

Special incentives were offered to ensure the enrolment of women. These included: (a) a slightly lower level in the entry requirements for women; (b) the assignment of successful women graduates to posts near to their homes; and (c) the provision of accommodation for children of one year of age and less in places where the residential part of the training was given. The mothers contributed towards the cost of this accommodation. Although the training extended over a period of three years the drop-out rate was insignificant when compared with that for other teacher education programmes.

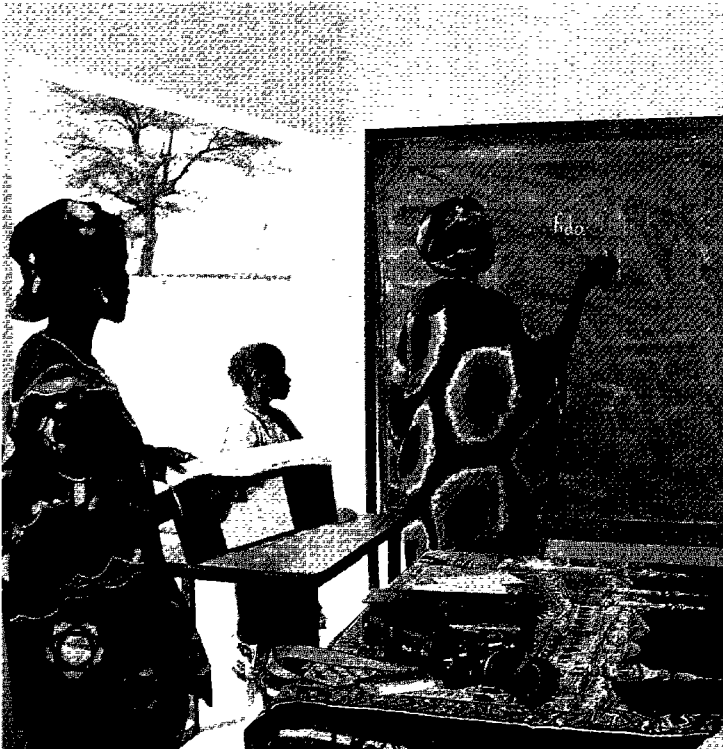
Source: UNESCO 1993.

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nearly 80 per cent, compared with just over 50 per cent for males. The average illiteracy rate for women hides extremely high rates in Burkina Faso, 90.8 per cent, Sierra Leone, 81.8 per cent, Guinea, 78.1 per cent, Benin, 74.2 per cent and Mali, 76.9 per cent.

#### Girls' and women's education in the Sahel

In the Sahel, access to education for girls and women has been more inadequate than in other regions of Africa. Except for Cape Verde the enrolment rates for girls are further away from the education for all target (80 per cent) than those for boys. The Sahelian governments have recognized these shortcomings and are taking steps to address them. They were among the first African countries to prepare their national plans of action for the education of girls and women as a follow-up to the Pan-African Conference on the Education of Girls and to initiate pilot projects to improve educational access for rural girls.

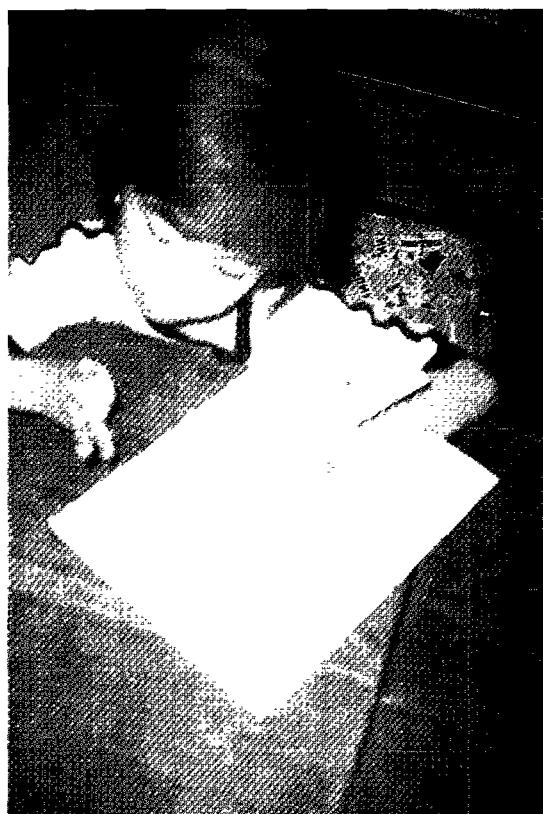


## Asia and the Pacific

Girls' enrolments grew much faster than boys' in the region between the years 1985 and 1992. Girls accounted for 45 per cent of the total primary enrolments in 1990 as compared with 44 per cent in 1985. Nevertheless two out of every three children who are out of school in the region are girls.

Good progress was made in Bangladesh, where the number of girls in primary schools increased by 50 per cent between the years 1985 and 1990 and brought the proportion of girls enrolled from 40 per cent in 1985 to 45 per cent in 1990. Stipends for secondary school girls in Bangladesh are proving successful as a means of keeping them in schools. In China, female enrolments rose from 11 per cent to 96 per cent in the last twenty years and this was achieved by offering incentives such as free tuition and textbooks for girls living in deprived areas and by establishing boarding schools for them. Lower entry levels for girls also enabled them to obtain access to secondary education. In Indonesia, where education is considered to be an integral part of nation building, gender disparity in enrolment does not appear until the secondary level of education where girls make up 45 per cent of the enrolments. For many Asian girls the disparity is in the kind of education offered to girls and boys. Girls are invariably taught 'home economics' which is for the most part oriented to household duties. On the other hand, boys are provided with trade-related courses. While there have been some attempts to introduce commerce, including the use of computers, such programmes are mainly limited to the urban areas. Much needs to be done to identify those trade-related fields which would be appropriate for girls in rural areas.

Despite the considerable expansion of literacy in Asia and the Pacific in the last twenty years, more than three quarters of the world's adult illiterates are to be found in the region. According to UNESCO estimates, between 1980 and 1990, female literacy rates have improved substantially in the Asia region as a



**Table 2.1 Gross enrolment ratios and the percentage of women teachers in Sahelian countries**

First level education				
Countries	Enrolment ratio		% points difference	% women teachers
	M	F		
Burkina Faso	46	29	17	27
Cape Verde	117	113	4	60
Chad	89	41	48	6
Gambia	81	56	25	31
Mali	32	19	13	24
Mauritania	70	55	15	18
Niger	37	21	16	33
Senegal	56	39	17	27

### **Box 2.4 Bangladesh**

#### **Female secondary school assistance project**

Bangladesh is a country where access to educational opportunities for girls was more limited than almost anywhere else in the world. Financial constraints and cultural resistance to education were major obstacles to schooling for girls. When parents had the means to send their children to school, then preference was given to their sons. Girls were regarded as economic assets with a duty to contribute to the family income at the earliest possible opportunity. As a result girls and women, who make up half the population, were left out of the development process and only one girl in seven between the ages of 11 and 16 ever attended a secondary school.

The International Development Association (IDA) has, therefore, provided assistance for the solution of this particular problem. This helps by providing stipends for girls which enable them to pay for secondary school attendance and examination fees and to meet the costs of text-books, stationery, uniforms, transportation, etc.

A successful pilot project has been completed and has shown that stipends can assist in increasing enrolments. 650,000 girls will now receive secondary schooling as a result of the project. Future progress will be carefully evaluated to ensure that objectives are met.

*Source: International Development Association, The World Bank, 1993. Investing in the Future.*

whole. Between 1980 and 1995, illiteracy rates were reduced from 42 per cent to 23.7 per cent in eastern Asia/Oceania and from 75.5 per cent to 63.4 per cent in Southern Asia. It is in eastern Asia that one sees a substantial narrowing of the gap between the proportion of male and female illiterates. In southern Asia the proportion of illiterate women continues to be much higher

than that of men. It is highest in countries such as Afghanistan, 52.8 per cent, Bangladesh, 61.5 per cent, Nepal, 59.1 per cent and Pakistan, 50.0 per cent. In addition there have been obstacles to literacy programmes. It appears that skills-oriented literacy classes have been the most effective means of ensuring permanent literacy.

### **Box 2.5 China**

#### **Skills-based literacy programme for women**

The All China Women's Federation and the Yunnan Education Commission have co-operated in the implementation of programmes designed to provide literacy and numeracy instruction and skills training for deprived rural women in the mountainous region of Yunnan. As a result more than 26,000 women have become literate and 270,000 have received training in a wide variety of skills (70 in all) related to such activities as grafting fruit trees, raising pigs and assuming leadership roles and participating in decision-making activities. While the women attend classes their menfolk are expected to help with household duties. Special measures are taken to provide protection for the women when they go to and from classes.

*Source: UNESCO: 1995.*

The Asia Pacific Programme for Education for All (APPEAL), which was launched in 1987, has promoted the concept of an integrated approach to education for all children, young people and adults. It has led the way in terms of sharing initiatives and providing assistance to member states in the preparation of national plans for education for all. Family literacy programmes have been encouraged and parents have developed new relationships with their children.

A review of the progress made in the implementation of the Jomtien Declaration in 1992 showed that countries which had both high enrolments in primary schools and high literacy rates, were moving towards the extension of basic education to nine years and were also developing pre-school education programmes. Abject poverty

has long been the lot of many southern Asian women. Programmes for educational and economic development which alleviate poverty should be intensified. Strategies should be adopted which enable poor women to help themselves and their children. The expansion of industries and the increased employment of women in some Asian countries could, however, prolong their deprivation rather than improve their status. In such circumstances trade unions and women's associations should be encouraged to take a more active role in providing education and training opportunities for employed women to promote their advancement.

## Box 2.6 Nepal

### The family literacy programme

A family literacy programme was established in the village of Adai Gon in Nepal, for the purpose of showing how literacy skills can improve family living standards. The programme was conducted in 25 homes, all of which belonged to members of a community known as the Kumals, a people who have been principally engaged in pottery making and, more recently, in subsistence farming.

The activities to be undertaken were determined at a three-day workshop which was attended by the members of the community and representatives of the agencies which agreed to assist the project. A number of activities were identified as appropriate for implementation. One was the establishment of kitchen gardens which would increase the income-earning capacity of the villagers. This required instruction in techniques for growing vegetables and help was needed for the purchase of seeds, materials and irrigation pipes. Literacy and numeracy teaching was directly related to vegetable growing activities and marketing procedures. Another activity was the involvement of local school teachers in the establishment of a club where school children could obtain assistance in doing their homework both before and after school. A third activity was to encourage young mothers to keep 'baby books' in which information was kept related to the health and nutrition of babies and details were recorded related to the development of children and to special events in their lives.

The project was designed to be relevant to the social, economic and cultural needs of the Kumals. Assistance was provided by Save the Children, (USA), The Centre for International Education at the University of Massachusetts and UNESCO and included the provision of consultancy services, materials and funds.

Source: UNESCO 1994.

## **The Arab States**

In the Arab region religious bodies make an important contribution to the promotion of education for girls and women. In holy books such as the Qu'ran and the Hadith there are exhortations in favour of learning, e.g: 'Education is the responsibility of each Muslim man and woman' and 'Read! and thy Lord is most generous; who teaches by the pen teaches people what they know not'. In Jordan an effective religious campaign was conducted in support of girls' education and similar initiatives could be followed in those countries where the gender gaps are greatest. Single-sex schools for girls have helped to increase enrolments in Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. It is also to be noted that in Kuwait both the Rector

of Kuwait University and the Under Secretary of the Ministry of Higher Education are women and it is estimated that women make up two thirds of the student body in the university.

There has been a marked improvement in the provision of access to education for girls and women at all levels in the region.

In 1992 girls accounted for 44 per cent, 43 per cent and 37 per cent of the enrolments at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education respectively. At the Fifth Conference of Ministers of Education and Ministers of Economic Planning in the Arab States (MINEDARAB V), delegates from nineteen countries agreed to strengthen regional co-operation in the area for the purpose of eliminating illiteracy and improving the quality of education.

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### **Box 2.7 Tunisia**

#### **Multidisciplinary caravan convoys**

Tunisia was the first country in the Arab region to develop a programme intended to promote the control of population growth. A national campaign was organized which used all the resources of the mass media – radio, television, posters and the press, etc. – to encourage the introduction of contraceptive methods and which involved key family members, such as menfolk, grandmothers and mothers-in-law, in decision-making regarding the size of families.

The campaign was implemented by means of caravan convoys, consisting of 20 vehicles, which were used by personnel from a variety of fields, e.g. the medical, paramedical, legal and teaching professions and from the social services. The convoys were established in order to reach remote rural areas which had no access to family planning centres. They provided a range of services which included the provision of information and instruction on the need for family planning, medical care, the prevention of AIDS and advice on the use of condoms. Sympathetic consultancy services for married couples were also offered.

In less than a decade, since the beginning of the campaign, 30 missions have been carried out to rural communities. Assessments of individual community needs were drawn up and submitted to the relevant authorities for follow-up action. It is to be noted that in the year 1960, the populations of Tunisia and Syria were 4.2 million and 4.5 million respectively. By 1993 Tunisia's population had risen to 8.6 million but that of Syria had grown to 13.5 million. The GNP per capita for Tunisia is now US\$1,420 while that for Syria is US\$990. This would appear to indicate that the convoys have contributed to the slowdown in population growth in Tunisia. Other countries such as Indonesia, Yemen, Algeria, Belgium and the USA have shown an interest in the approach.

*Source: UNESCO 1994.*

## Box 2.8 Sudan

### Theatre for life

The province of Kordofan in Sudan has a population of 3,166,000 people, of whom 2,086,000 live in rural areas, 610,000 are urban dwellers and 470,000 are nomadic. The main occupations are pastoral animal husbandry and small-scale settled cultivation. The rate of illiteracy is 71 per cent among 21-year old men and 80 per cent among women of the same age group. Infectious diseases such as bilharzia and malaria are endemic and there is a general shortage of clean drinking water. The province has been afflicted by a variety of social and economic problems which include widespread drought and civil war.

Since this predominantly rural society has almost no access to the mass media such as the radio, television and newspapers, it was decided to use a travelling theatre as a means of conveying educational messages to people in remote areas. These messages were initially in the field of health and were those contained in the UNESCO/UNICEF/WHO publication *Facts for Life* and were ten in number. The actors employed to produce the messages were school children – both girls and boys – all of whom were below the age of 15. Initially urban children were chosen for the exercise and they visited community centres and schools in villages on a monthly basis to present their performances. But the fact that urban children used a different pronunciation from that of their audience made them less effective as conveyors of messages. It was then decided to recruit the actors from schools in the area where they were expected to perform. In this way the exercise was transformed from one that was from the top down to one that was from the bottom up.

The number of actors grew from 20 in 1993 to 41 in 1995. To date 219 performances have been given to a total of 166,350 people. A regular evaluation of audience reaction has been carried out. Although the principal aim of the project is to provide health education and to control and prevent disease which endangers the lives of girls and women, it is also designed to encourage literacy and to reinforce the basic education given in schools.

*Source: UNICEF. Theatre for Life: A Modality for Communicating Facts for Life Messages. A Case Study Report. Makki Abdel Nabi Mohammed. 1995.*

The government of Egypt has stated that education is the key to the country's national security and reiterated its commitment to the education of girls at the Education for All Summit of the Nine High-Population Countries which was held in New Delhi in December 1993. In this context the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood gives priority to special education programmes for girls and women in marginal urban and rural areas.

Between 1985 and 1992 the girls' enrolment ratio in the Arab region rose from 104 per cent to 114 per cent. However, ratios vary from 116 per cent in Lebanon to 37 per cent in the

Yemen and 31 per cent in Djibouti. Large disparities remain: at least one girl in four is not enrolled in a primary school and five out of eight women are illiterate.

If no drastic measures are taken to improve access to education, one fifth of the girls between the ages of six and eleven will be out of school by the year 2000. Nor does the fact that girls are enrolled in school mean that they are ensured equal educational opportunities. In some countries the sexes follow different school courses whether by choice or convenience. As there is a close correlation between education and employment, this means that

women are denied access to the same career opportunities as men. For instance, in those countries, where there is sexual segregation at all levels of learning, girls learn far less mathematics and science than boys and are not allowed to take part in physical education classes. Vocational training for girls also tends to concentrate on traditional skills and few women students take courses in applied science or technology at the university. This is the case even when government regulations allow them to follow such programmes.

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The cultural and religious context of the Arab states demands that the question of girls' and women's education be resolved within the region. The dialogue that has been started in preparation for the World Conference on

Women, Beijing, China 1995 should be encouraged and extended. There is clearly a need for a better understanding of the cultural background of Arab women and for an appreciation of the fact that improvement in their lives will not come about by transplanting a western concept of women's empowerment. In this respect Arab universities can, and should, play a leading role in generating new knowledge on the needs of women and developing appropriate strategies through carefully targetted research and a wide dissemination of the results obtained within the region. In a review of the educational situation in the Arab States, undertaken by UNICEF (MENARO), countries were clustered according to common characteristics. The educational needs of girls and women are summarized in Table 2.2.

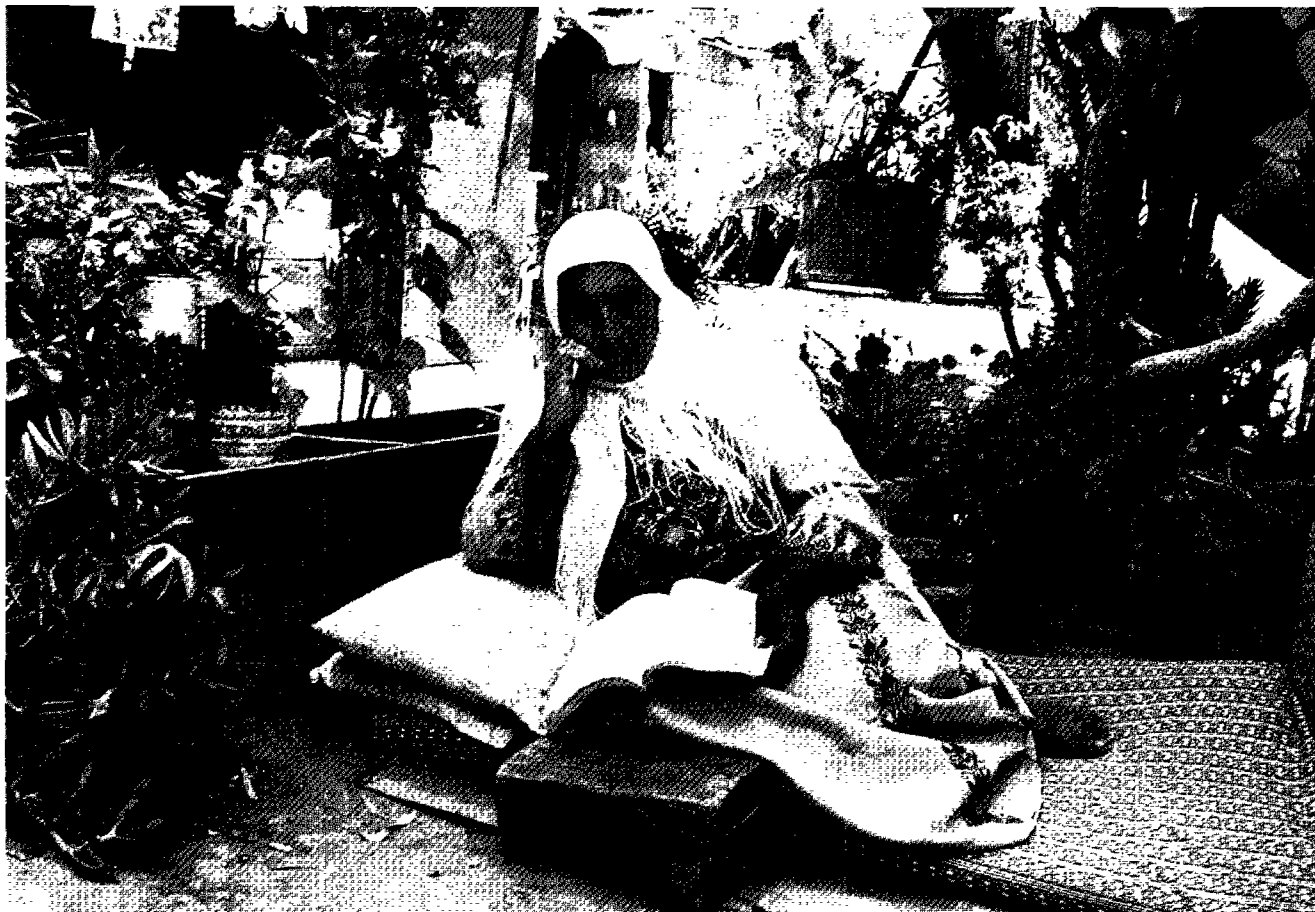


Table 2.2 Arab States' educational needs, by cluster

Individual areas of need	Analyze government expenditure on education	Shift GNP expenditure from military to education needs	Increase girls' primary enrolments	Increase girls' primary retention	Lower the primary level gender gap	Increase girls' secondary enrolments	Reduce female adult illiteracy	Repair educational infrastructure	Render teaching/learning process more future oriented	Address children's psychological needs
<b>Cluster one</b>										
Qatar									•	
Turkey					•	•			•	
Bahrain									•	
United Arab Emirates							•		•	
Oman					•	•	•		•	
Jordan						•			•	
Kuwait	•	•						•	•	•
<b>Cluster two</b>										
Tunisia				•	•	•	•		•	
Syrian Arab Republic					•	•	•		•	
Egypt	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	
Saudi Arabia	•	•	•		•	•	•		•	
Algeria			•		•	•	•		•	
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya				•		•	•		•	
<b>Cluster three</b>										
Morocco	•		•	•	•	•	•		•	
Sudan		•	•	•	•	•	•		•	
Yemen	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	
Djibouti			•	•		•	•		•	•
<b>War-torn countries and territories</b>										
Islamic Republic of Iran					•	•	•	•	•	•
Iraq			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Lebanon							•	•	•	•
West Bank & Gaza			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Source: Education for the 21st Century, UNICEF.



## **Box 2.9 The Yemen**

### **Improving women's access to higher education**

There is inadequate access to secondary education for girls in The Yemen. This is partly due to the shortage of women teachers who are able to instruct at this level and also to the high cost of bringing in expatriate women teachers to fill the vacancies which exist.

Cultural and social considerations play a major role in The Yemen in determining whether females are permitted access to educational opportunities or not. This is particularly the case in rural areas. Tertiary education for women is also restricted because of the unsuitable boarding accommodation made available to women at Faculties of Education. The possibility of women students being taught by male staff also prevents many women from being allowed to follow courses.

In order to overcome these constraints a project was developed for the construction of special hostels for approximately 800 women students. Hostels which have already been built in Aden and which are capable of accommodating 240 more students are also to be renovated. By this means the amount of suitable dormitory space for females in Faculties of Education will be increased by 50 per cent. In addition stipends for all female students are provided as an additional encouragement to enrolment.

The government also showed its commitment to the development of women's education by setting up an advisory group to consider women's educational needs and to assist in the establishment of a truly national workforce.

*Source: Improving Women's Access to Higher Education: H. Dundar and J. Haworth. The World Bank, 1994.*

## **Europe**

Europe has, for the most part, achieved equality in the provision of access to education for boys and girls in the 1990s. This is largely a result of the Equal Opportunities Act, which is in force in various European countries and which prohibits sex discrimination in the labour market and allows for analyses to be conducted of equity considerations in education. The studies carried out centred on the ways in which children understand sex roles, the content of education programmes and the interactions between boys and girls in the classroom. Teachers' organizations were actively involved in carrying out the studies and 'teachers for equality' groups assisted in the establishment of policies designed to ensure gender equality in particular schools. The Nordic countries have been in the forefront

in addressing gender equality in the provision of education. In Sweden, the importance of equal opportunities was stressed in the curriculum prepared in 1969, while in the United Kingdom individual schools adopted their own equal opportunities policies which discouraged stereotyping, encouraged similar activities for boys and girls and gave special attention to the monitoring and evaluation of programmes. In 1985, in line with the European Council's move to adopt an 'Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Girls and Boys in Education', member states developed projects at both the national and local level, which were designed to encourage girls' interest and participation in new technologies. Despite this effort, there are still gender gaps in enrolment in the traditionally male-dominated technical and vocational fields.

It is significant that matters related to the education of girls and women are rarely referred to in papers on national education, such as those prepared for the International Conference on Education. There has been a tendency to address issues of equality in education at conferences which deal with equal opportunities rather than in European ministerial meetings at which development priorities are considered. The implications are that considerations of equality in education are regarded as being of insufficient importance for review by decision-makers.

The number of women enrolled in higher education has increased considerably and data show that many more women now follow courses in non-traditional fields. UNESCO statistics for European countries reveal that between 1985 and 1990/1991 women's enrolments increased by 22.2 per cent



*Adult education in Spain*

## **Box 2.10 Ireland**

### **Irish girls into new technologies**

This project was one of a number developed by the European Union member states as a result of the 1985 resolution on Equal Opportunities in Education. It was coordinated by the Department of Education and its aims were:

- To develop girls' confidence and to increase their competence in technology
- To raise their awareness of gender stereotyping in work and in society
- To encourage their active participation in planning, decision-making and problem solving
- To encourage them to reconsider their views of traditional subjects and choice of careers

Four subjects of study were offered: electronics, computers, communications and design. Choices of core and optional subjects made flexibility possible and enabled scarce resources to be used more effectively. The students, who studied at the junior secondary level of education, received instruction which increased their awareness of career possibilities and encouraged them to solve problems. Out-of-school resources which included visits to enterprises and discussions with parents and other visitors were included in the programme. Skills training and studies of the media were key items in the courses of instruction. There was emphasis on an active approach to learning and a balance was maintained between theoretical instruction and practice. Students were encouraged to maintain records of the work they did.

The programme was launched nationally in September 1992 at a conference entitled 'Gender Across the Curriculum'. Teachers engaged to work in the project received prior in-service training.

*Source: EC/Department of Education. European Conference on Gender Across the Curriculum. September 28-30 1992. Ennis. Co. Clare, Ireland.*

from about 4.5 million to 5.5 million. Today women make up about 49 per cent of the number of students taking higher education courses. Growing expectations regarding access to further education have, in consequence, increased the pressure on governments to expand all types of post-secondary education services. In a review of 20 countries it was found that the highest increases were registered in law (44 per cent), architecture (39.9 per cent) and engineering (39.4 per cent).

Although illiteracy rates in Europe are low compared with those for other regions of the world, functional illiteracy among women is still a cause for concern. It is highest in the poorest communities, in ethnic minorities and

among the handicapped. Illiteracy among young people of 15 years of age and above is higher for women than it is for men. Estimates made in 1990 showed that the countries with the highest female illiteracy rates were: Portugal (18.5 per cent), Greece (10.9 per cent), Belarus (6.6 per cent) and Spain (5.8 per cent). These figures also indicate that in Europe, as elsewhere in the world, rural women are worse off than their urban counterparts.

Despite the progress made in Europe, there are clear indications that much remains to be done to achieve equality between men and women. According to the 1991 statistics (Human Development Report, 1994), women science graduates of universities accounted for

## **Box 2.11 Germany**

### **Information and communication technology**

#### **A comprehensive training scheme for women by women**

The Women's Technical Training Centre (FrauenTechnikCentrum) in Hamburg provides comprehensive technical education for women and specializes in information and communication technology. All the instructors are women. The trainees, who are of all age groups, learn not only how to use the necessary software required in information technology but are taught other relevant aspects of the technology they will be expected to use. They are taught the skills and understanding needed for them to obtain employment and to adapt to the needs of modern society. Other course subjects are business administration and political science and there are weekly meetings with a psychologist in order to increase the students' self-awareness and confidence.

The first course was held in 1985 and was so successful that a demand was created for more. Additional courses were then provided in the evenings. In the initial two years of the project the teaching was done by volunteers and the trainees paid small fees which were used to pay for the rent of lecture rooms and the purchase of equipment. Since 1990 the centre has received financial assistance from a number of public institutions and from the European Social Fund.

An important part of the centre's work has been to train the trainers of trainers, known as 'multipliers', who then go on to establish other centres of comprehensive technical education. Among those trained have been women instructors in technical education from the new Länder in the former East Germany. Fourteen women from there followed courses for six months before going back to establish technical education centres. To date they have set up twelve new centres.

*Source: Education in Information for Women by Women: International Workshop USE, Hamburg, 30 November-3 December 1992.*

## Box 2.12 Norway

### Outreach programmes for immigrant women

A special project for immigrant women in Norway was conducted by the Ministry of Education in 11 municipalities between 1986 and 1988. The aim of the project was to promote equal status for immigrant women by enabling them to take part in adult education programmes. The target group was women who could not speak Norwegian and who, for a variety of reasons, did not take advantage of the education programmes available to them. Teaching materials were specially prepared for the courses which included a number of features such as outreach programmes, social activities, courses on special topics, women's meetings and other activities designed to encourage their participation.

Immigrant women who had lived in Norway for some time played a leading role in the programmes and in animating women to enrol in the courses. Personal contacts were essential for enlisting interest. It was learnt that it was essential to relate the teaching to the participants' knowledge levels and interests.

Source: Gender Equality in Norway. The National Report to the 4th. UN Conference on Women in Beijing, 1995. October 1994.

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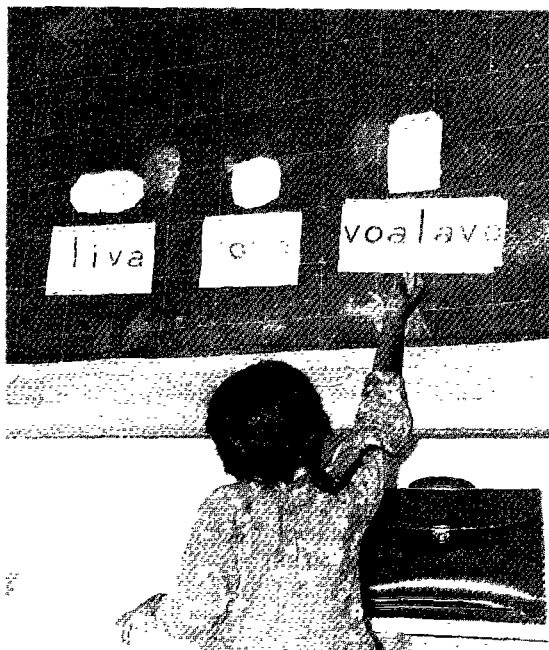
less than 15 per cent of the total number of graduates in 16 European countries. The lowest percentage recorded for men science graduates was 21 per cent in Italy. Although the labour force in 14 countries comprises an average of 40 per cent women, less than 20 per cent are administrators and managers. The education of women must be supported by public policies and enforced regulations which ensure equal opportunities for men and women in all spheres of society.

## Latin America and the Caribbean

In Latin America and the Caribbean girls have gained an advantage over boys in obtaining access to primary and secondary schooling, since the enrolment of females now exceeds that of males in eleven countries in the region. This increase is due in part to the efforts made by governments and to the traditional importance given to education and is in spite of the fact that in the 1970s and 1980s per capita spending declined almost everywhere in those countries.

Enrolment rates are nearly 90 per cent for both girls and boys in primary education and between 60 and 75 per cent in secondary education. However these figures fail to reveal the high drop-out rates. Of 100 pupils who attend primary schools in the region, only 70 go on to the second grade, only 61 to the third grade and only 55 to the fourth grade. This is particularly the case in Latin America. Girls are the main





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victims in this regard, especially in rural areas where indigenous communities have a poor command of Spanish and where schools are of low quality. 14.3 per cent of girls between the ages of 6 and 11 do not benefit from basic edu-

cation. In Brazil only 40 per cent of the children enrolled in primary schools complete the fourth grade of schooling. The rates are particularly low in rural areas, deprived urban slums and indigenous settlements. In Haiti schools have been badly disrupted by political instability and economic hardship. Parents fear for the safety of their children and refuse to send them to school.

The average enrolment in secondary education in the region ranges from 60 to 70 per cent. In most Latin American countries women's enrolment rates are similar to those of men and they exceed them in eleven countries. Even in other areas, the ratio of women to men is unchanged, except in the case of indigenous women and in so far as access to secondary technical education is concerned.

However, it must be stressed that if the present drop-out figures remain then there will be 40 million illiterate people in the region by the year 2000, most of whom will be women. Several regional meetings have highlighted the importance of improving the quality of education and making it more relevant to needs. Both

### Box 2.13 Chile

#### The parents and children project

The Parents and Children Project was implemented in Osoro in southern Chile as a means of promoting the development of children, parents and the communities where they live. This was done by means of a radio drama which sent out educational messages related to literacy, nutrition, food conservation and family relationships. Written materials, based on the content of the broadcasts, were produced. As a follow-up to the radio programmes discussions were held by the listeners under the chairmanship of a coordinator who was chosen from the community. Special booklets were also produced for pre-school aged children, which were designed to encourage the willingness to learn and to increase their creativity and thinking capacity. The parents used these booklets when working with young children and discussed their contents with them. An evaluation of the programmes was carried out which showed that they had a positive impact not only on the parents but also on the community as a whole. It also revealed that parental attitudes changed as a result of the broadcasts and that there was a greater readiness to consider change and to analyze problems and to solve them.

The project received assistance from The Research and Development Centre, a non-governmental organization which worked closely with the local radio station.

Source: CRESALC.

## Box 2.14 Guatemala

### Secondary education and skills training centre

The Escuela Profesional 'San Vicente de Paul' was founded in an impoverished district of Guatemala City in 1968 for the purpose of providing secondary education and skills training for girls. The school has a teaching staff of 25 and an enrolment of 513. Another 110 students follow similar courses in programmes broadcast by Schools by Radio. Library facilities were lacking and in 1973 a number of volunteers, former students of the school and a few booksellers established a small library. But there is now a need to expand the library so that it can meet the reading needs of both staff and students in the school and the listeners to the broadcast programmes. In addition to reference works, books are needed for subjects such as foreign languages, natural sciences and accountancy. The Guatemalan Branch of the International Association of Charities established the school. UNESCO is providing assistance for the supply of books through its Co-Action Programme.

Source: UNESCO Co-Action Programme.

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the Quito Declaration of 1991 and the Santiago Declaration of 1993 emphasized the urgent need to improve the quality of the education provided.

Higher education has seen rapid expansion in recent decades and women's enrolment rates, according to some studies, have exceeded those of men by a multiplier of 1.06 per cent. This ratio varies from one country to another and extends from 50 to 200 women per 100 men. The ratio also differs according to the field of study and ranges from 80 women to 100 men in science and technology to 297 women per 100 men in law and administration.

The illiteracy rate for women is 17 per cent, compared with 13.6 per cent for men. Most of the uneducated women in the region live in rural areas, work on small farms or belong to indigenous groups. There are great differences between the levels of education of women in rural and urban areas. The education of girls and women in Latin America and the Caribbean must contribute to poverty alleviation and social upward mobility. The issues of women in minority groups must be addressed in a manner which allows them to find solutions to their own problems. The complexity of their social, economic and cultural circumstances demands that consid-

eration be given not only to the language in which they are taught.

## The Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

Girls and women in LDCs are among the most deprived groups. Of the estimated number of more than 165 million illiterate adults in LDCs more than 100 million are women.

Gaps in the literacy rates between men and women above 15 years of age range from 6 percentage points in Guinea and Guinea-Bissau to 30 percentage points and more in Mozambique, Togo, Malawi, Liberia and The Gambia. The gross enrolment ratio of girls at the primary and secondary levels in most LDCs lags behind that of boys. Some critical examples are to be found in Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger and Somalia.

The countries which have a projected female literacy rate of less than 30 per cent by the year 2000 should be regarded as requiring emergency action to redress the educational inequalities that exist in the education of girls. These countries are: Burundi, Ethiopia, The

Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Nepal. (Fig. 2.1).

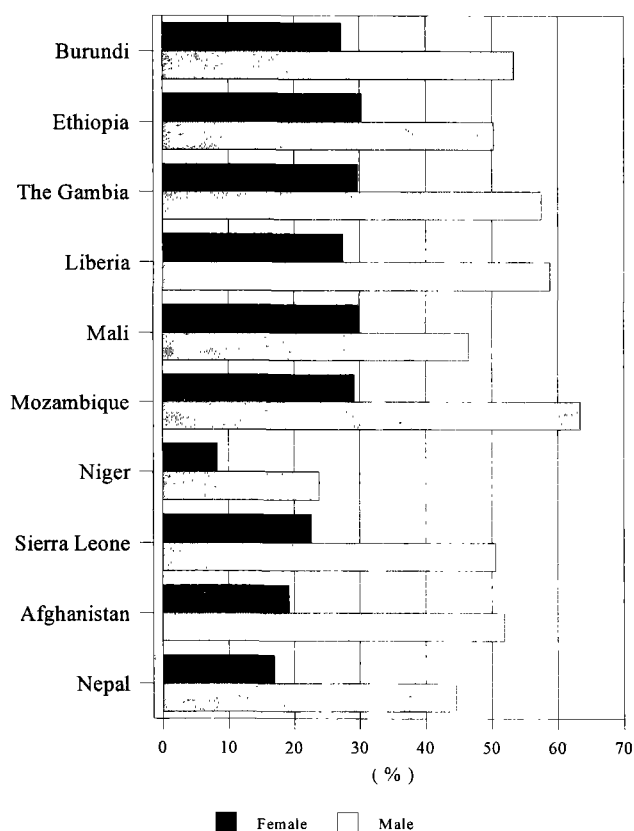
### Urgent priorities for the future

Women's needs must be considered in the development of education for all. If this is not done there is little possibility of changing the social and educational structures that now inhibit progress. Schools are a microcosm of society. To reform them in order to increase access to learning and to improve the quality of the teaching provided at the levels of both basic and higher education, is impossible without major attitudinal changes on the part of parents, teachers, decision-makers and women themselves. Unless

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there are favourable cultural, social and economic conditions and a real understanding of the underlying causes of inequality, comprehensive and sustainable policies will not be developed. So far research on gender in primary education has tended to concentrate on the problems of access to and retention in educational institutions. But it is also essential that other problems related to gender be considered, such as the different ways in which girls learn. There must be an appreciation of the manner in which girls acquire self-confidence and knowledge and girls' views must be sought on the various disciplines that may be open to them – especially in the fields of science and technology. Studies must also be carried out on the influence exercised by teachers on pupils' attitudes to learning. A review is also necessary of women's attitudes regarding decision-making and management responsibilities in fields extending from local community activities to top executive positions, as a means of finding out how they can be involved more closely in the exercise of power. All these considerations have a bearing on the development of future strategies for providing increased access to learning for women and for improving its quality.

**Fig. 2.1 Countries in which women's literacy rates will be less than 30% by the year 2000 (estimates)**



# Global priorities for action

## Strategies for the expansion and development of educational opportunities for girls and women

In this chapter strategies are presented which are widely regarded as essential for increasing access to good quality educational opportunities for girls and women. The main targets are deprived groups, particularly those girls and women living in rural and marginalized urban areas. Where necessary regional priorities are indicated together with those social, cultural and economic factors which contribute to the development of education for girls.

Successful strategies have been characterized by one or more of the following:

1. A commitment on the part of a national government to the development of educational opportunities for girls and women.

2. A dedication on the part of non-governmental organizations to the improvement of the status of women.

3. A demand for the advancement of women from both the community as a whole and from women in particular.

4. Community participation, particularly by women, in identifying the strategies to be adopted for the implementation of programmes.

5. Strong external agency support through direct and indirect involvement in projects and programmes which promote the welfare of girls and women.

6. The advocacy and promotion of equity issues by pressure groups such as women's associations and organizations.

Factors affecting the education of girls and women are varied and complex. Not only do they interact in many ways, the intensity of

their influence on the situation of girls and women varies from one continent to another. Figure 3.1 summarizes the factors which determine the educational status of girls and women

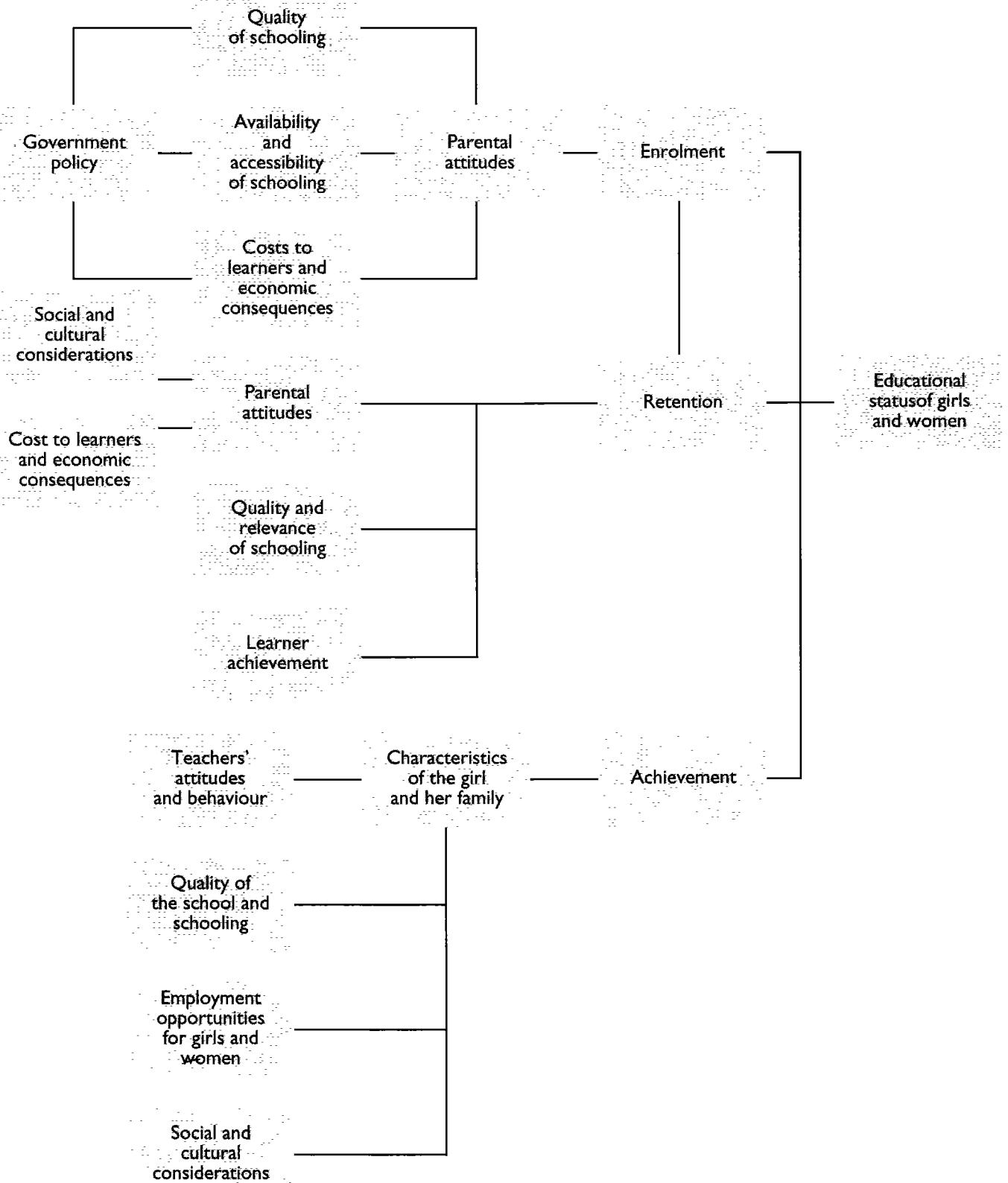
Few of the strategies used have been implemented on a large scale. This has been due, in part, to the strong negative influence of the social, cultural and economic environment and also to the failure of national planners to address the needs of women in national development plans and plans of action. *It must also be recognized that the provision of education for girls and women cannot be ensured until the education systems themselves are improved and teachers are accorded the status and remuneration commensurate with the tasks they are expected to carry out.*

### Increasing access to education and improving its quality - an imperative

*Educational policy makers and planners must accept that primary schooling is the only form of education that most children will receive and therefore its main purpose must be to prepare young children for adult life.* In this regard primary education curricula should be planned and implemented in such a way that the methods used ensure that children acquire those values and attitudes which promote equality, co-operation, respect for social and ethnic differences, tolerance and harmony as well as the skills needed for daily life and should, when necessary, furnish each child with survival



Fig. 3.1 Factors which affect the education of girls and women



Adapted from models of factors which affect the education of girls by Karin Hyde: Discussion Paper 1, July 1994, The African Academy of Sciences.

skills. The extension of basic education from six to nine years may well be an appropriate solution to the retention of girls in schools since elementary education is normally considered to be the first cycle of education.

*Policies* which have been successful in retaining girls and women in educational programmes should be promoted and encouraged. Such policies include:

#### (i) Costs and financing

- a reduction in the cost of education for poor families
- an increase in government allocations to education budgets
- the encouragement of wealthier members of society to make financial contributions to education

#### (ii) Access

- an enforcement of laws which make education compulsory
- the organization of systems of education which enable courses of instruction to be followed by drop-outs and by those who wish to re-enrol in programmes
- the acceptance of alternative programmes of schooling, which use a variety of delivery systems and give official recognition to the part played by other partners in the provision of education
- the establishment of small schools close to residences and single-sex schools where such schools are desirable
- raising the proportion of female teachers to at least 50 per cent of the teaching staff

#### (iii) Organization of programmes

- a combination of literacy and numeracy instruction with income-generating activities

#### (iv) Partnership

- the use of voluntary organizations and services in the development of educational programmes

The majority of girls who are denied access to education live in widely dispersed com-

munities in rural areas. There is an urgent need to establish small, inexpensive schools, which accommodate a number of classes (e.g. in one-teacher schools), and which are within easy reach of the pupils they serve. Gender-sensitive training is required for those who plan, administer and deliver educational services. Incentives which reduce the costs of education can be offered in accordance with local needs. These incentives have to be well managed and, to be effective, the potential beneficiaries must be aware of their availability. *Campaigns* which promote schooling for girls should be planned and carried out with the close co-operation of the community in the planning and delivery of services. Times of schooling also need to be more flexible with regard to the beginning and end of the school day and school holidays should be arranged to meet the demands of girls who have family and household obligations to meet. Every effort should be made to involve schools in community life. Local technicians, particularly women engaged in the fields of agriculture, health, nutrition, etc., should be invited to share their knowledge and skills with girls.

*Successful initiatives in early childhood care and education should be supported and expanded* to meet the increasing demands for the care and education of the young. Much more should be done to increase access to such services and to promote their organization and maintenance by communities.

Issues related to the requirements and interests of girls should be addressed in the planning of school programmes. The *curriculum*, as well as the *teaching and learning* materials, should promote equality in the relationships between the sexes. Illustrations and stories, for example, should avoid stereotypes which denigrate girls and women and *teachers should be trained to create a learning environment in which boys and girls develop an understanding of equality in their relationships*. In this regard, population education and guidance and counselling programmes are of particular importance, since they deal with concerns which are closely related

to the pupils' backgrounds, such as family size, sexuality, health and nutrition, human rights and responsibilities, as well as ecology. More specifically guidance and counselling programmes can extend beyond career counselling to include self development and those skills which will help girls to confront social, economic and cultural problems when they grow up. The programme should, therefore, include such topics as legislation governing the rights of women, educational and job opportunities for women, the setting of goals and self-assertion and communication.

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If primary education proves too costly for poor parents then good *secondary* education will not be available for them either. Rural girls are more restricted by traditional cultural values and are more likely to marry at an earlier age than urban ones. Yet social mobility is essential if poor girls are to make progress in society and are subsequently to be involved in decision-making exercises. Although boarding schools are costly they have often been the means by which

secondary education has been made available to girls in rural areas in traditional societies. *In order to assist gifted, rural girls to obtain higher education a few good quality girls' boarding schools should be established in developing countries.* These schools should be monitored by both national and international authorities to ensure that standards are maintained and that they are for the benefit of genuinely poor girls. More effort should also be made to persuade rich people to be the benefactors of poor girls. As an incentive girls' boarding schools established by means of trust funds could be named in honour of their benefactors.

*Single-sex schools* should be established in societies where such schools are demanded by parents. However careful evaluation of their curricula and their teaching and learning approaches should be made at regular intervals to ensure that they are as up-to-date as boys' schools and that they do not propagate derogatory stereotypes of girls and women. To date little research has been done on the psychological



effects of children attending single-sex schools, particularly in so far as relationships between men and women are concerned. This is a matter which should be the subject of careful study. While in certain societies, there may be academic benefits to be gained in single-sex schools, opportunities for boys and girls to work together in specific learning activities could foster an understanding of equal sharing. Girls-only schools could have associated boys' schools.

*Creative use should also be made of the various available technologies to improve educational opportunities.* The use of technology is particularly important in programmes where entry qualifications are lowered to promote an increase in the participation of women in education. Nevertheless women must reach a level of educational attainment which allows them to compete with their male counterparts on equal terms. In such cases multi-channel approaches using television, radio and audio and video cassettes, can enhance learning opportunities considerably. In cases where girls are obliged for cultural and other reasons to remain at home, their education can be continued through the use of technology. The greatest challenge is to determine the kind of education which is most appropriate for the conditions which obtain.

### Science and technology for all

*All girls who complete a programme of schooling should be literate in science and technology.* Science must, therefore, be made more attractive to girls and for this to occur science and technology programmes should draw upon the local environment for their subject matter and must be relevant to girls' activities and interests. Abstract scientific concepts and principles can be taught through day-to-day household activities and through the local environment. In science and technology programmes at all levels of education high priority should be given to the understanding and improvement of endogenous technologies related to women's work. Project



2000+, established jointly by UNESCO and the International Council of Associations for Science Education (ICASE), provides an appropriate platform for collaborative work between governments and the international community in the promotion of scientific and technological education for girls.

*Home economics or domestic science in its traditional form in schools should be phased out and replaced by training programmes that are more relevant to rural and urban societies and prepare girls for careers in the same way that vocational programmes do for boys.* Catering, garment-making, restaurant administration, food and beverages, food preservation and dietetics are all areas which could replace the traditional home economics programme. This change will demand the re-training of home economics teachers. This could be done with the assistance of donors if governments are committed to making the vital break away from the traditional curriculum.

It is important to build the confidence of girls in their ability to enter the scientific and technological fields on equal terms with boys. Guidance and counselling programmes should give girls the information which enables them to choose technology-based careers in non-traditional areas. More women should be encouraged to enter technical and vocational fields so that they can become role models for young girls. In

this regard, it is essential to train teachers to project attitudes that broaden women's vocational opportunities and prepare both women and men to share roles in society, in both public and private life and encourage them to share in decision-making.

### Non-formal and continuing education - a real second chance

Many girls and women will readily seize a second chance to obtain education, but the opportunities offered should lead to positive and tangible results. As is the case with literacy programmes, it is not enough to set up non-formal education and continuing education programmes. There must be a clear demand for them from the potential learners themselves. These programmes should:

- (a) address the specific needs of a targeted group of learners as defined by them
- (b) lead to official certificates equivalent to those of the formal system where appropriate
- (c) be given by appropriately trained personnel and be conducted in a suitable learning environment



- (d) use multi-media approaches, wherever possible, to complement the education given and as a means of increasing the motivation of the learners

*Non-formal and continuing education should be an integral part of the education system and should be articulated with the corresponding level of formal education.* For school-age girls, non-formal education must be regarded as an interim measure before their integration into the mainstream formal school system. Although many NGOs have been outstandingly successful in providing second chances for girls and women to learn, governments should also ensure that the demands for such out-of-school education are adequately met.

### Literacy - the foundation for lifelong learning

Effective literacy programmes take into account the roles of women in the areas of reproduction and production. Literacy programmes in their widest sense should include the building of awareness, the development of self-confidence and self-respect and the acquisition of learning and problem-solving abilities. They should consider learning as a transformation process by means of which choices can be made regarding the ways in which the quality of life can be improved.

Strategies for providing literacy for girls and women must adopt a two-pronged approach. On the one hand girls who go to school should leave it after becoming functionally literate. On the other hand literacy classes for adult women should be available. The challenge is how best to attract them to enrol in the programmes provided. The question whether there is a critical point of entry should be considered. *Successful literacy programmes are set up out of need. The first step is to identify that need.* Such needs include inter alia:

- (a) the acquisition of skills related to income-generating activities.

(b) the ability to correspond with family members, spouses or children who have migrated.

(c) access to information on agriculture and health, etc., within the community.

A demand for literacy programmes can be created through:

(a) government commitment reflected in well-organized mass literacy campaigns which encourage the participation of literate young people as volunteer instructors.

(b) possibilities of promotion for literate employees and workers.

(c) literacy instruction as a feature of income-generating activities.

(d) the involvement of women in the planning and implementation of literacy programmes and in the preparation of appropriate training materials.

(e) the existence of a home environment which encourages literacy, i.e. family literacy.

Literacy programmes are excellent channels for communicating important educational messages to women. Through such programmes they can learn about their rights and opportunities, the availability of health and education services and the best ways of bringing up their children. The learning approach in literacy classes must be interactive. It should encourage the participation of women, the expression of their ideas and feelings and the sharing of experiences. It must take advantage of what women already know and relate it to what is taught and to the problems that women meet in their daily lives.

The language of the literacy programme should be decided in accordance with the aims of the programme. If women are being made literate in order to have access to funding sources then the language used in literacy teaching should be that of the sources. If the literacy programme is intended to assist them in understanding information sent out to the general public, then the language used should be that in which the information is provided. The use of the mother tongue as a means of promoting learning achievement should be encouraged.



*Literacy programmes should assist social integration and should counteract any attempts to emphasize social, cultural and economic elements which divide community members.*

The creation of a literate environment also requires the assistance of the mass media and the business sector. Publishing companies and print-media houses, for example, can be encouraged to assist in the establishment of mobile library services for rural areas and to provide reading materials for school-age children. They should be made aware of the benefits that result from a literate population and understand that investment in literacy programmes is an investment in their own businesses. The preparation and publication of suitable reading materials, together with the provision of storage facilities and distribution systems are needed to create a literate environment in remote rural areas. The cost of making reading materials available for young children should be subsidized by both governments and donor agencies.

A home environment which encourages children to want to read and write before they attend school can greatly assist in the development of literacy skills. The role of parents and of other family members is of particular importance in this regard. Guidance, materials and training are needed in support of family literacy programmes.



### Universities - their multiple role

*Universities should educate students regarding women's issues and should furnish, through carefully conducted research, a body of knowledge which can assist in the formulation of national policies and programmes.* They should provide leadership in determining women's needs and indicate their problems, develop appropriate strategies, translate an awareness of gender into concrete terms and evaluate and monitor progress in addressing issues related to women. They should serve as the national conscience and maintain a dialogue on girls' and women's education for as long as necessary. Programmes related to women should be established in university courses and chairs should be created for them in such fields as law, commerce, science and technology. Where possible the private sector and aid agencies can be invited to support the *creation of university chairs for women.* They can take more vigorous action to attract more resources from the international community for conducting research into women's issues.

*At the institutional level and in all universities, policies must be implemented which provide equal opportunities for women.* They should permit women to proceed at a pace which is appropriate for them and the organization of programmes should take into account those occasions when women are obliged to stay away from courses because of their child-bearing and domestic responsibilities. Open universities and distance education programmes should be established and they should give consideration to the provision of special courses for women.

Universities must take the lead in the appointment of qualified and competent women to professorships and to posts where decision-making is required. They must also review their staff promotion policies to ensure that equal opportunities are open to both men and women. In view of the fact that universities often receive their resources from public funds, incentives should be given to those universities which adopt and implement a policy of equal opportunity for men and women and penalties could be imposed on those which fail to adopt such a policy.

Universities must become more active in using their resources in the interests of women. They can require their students, as part of their studies, to carry out community duties which benefit girls and women. For example, engineering students could work with communities on the development and improvement of the efficiency of endogenous technologies or help to make traditional production processes more efficient.

### Building a supportive social and economic environment

The media have great potential for influencing opinion, passing on information and creating a learning environment. They have a vital role to play in mobilizing public support for the involvement of women in development activities. Mass media campaigns should be launched

to raise the awareness of the public to the contribution made by women to development and to discourage stereotyped views of women that may exist. As the media are involved in various forms of communication, writers, illustrators, publishers and radio and television producers must assist in the building of positive public attitudes towards the equality of the sexes.

*By the end of the next women's decade all women should be aware of their rights as citizens and of what they must do to improve their standards of living.* This demands that they have access to information on health matters, education services, means of earning an income, legislation, legal aid, etc. It requires multiple delivery systems as well as various ways of conveying essential information to illiterate women. Dramatic performances and other traditional entertainments can be used in rural areas and elsewhere to convey messages regarding women. Each country needs to mount a public education and information programme on women's concerns. This can be provided through entertaining soap operas as is the case in Afghanistan.

The private sector should be encouraged to assist in providing for the welfare of women by:

(a) adopting employment policies which allow for the recruitment of women to vacancies, which encourage their promotion to decision-making positions and which are committed to equal opportunities for employment for both men and women.

(b) contributing to scholarships for poor girls.

(c) developing promotion schemes and marketing strategies which are favourable to the education of girls and women and which encourage them to take up careers in a variety of fields.

Men and women holding public office should be instructed or trained on gender issues and given the orientation which allows them to address the subject of gender equality in public life. *The advancement of women in various spheres must be considered a right and not a privilege.* Competition for promotion should be fair and women's competence should be assessed against that of

their male counterparts. *There must be a move away from a 'token approach' to one which reinforces a concept of rights in the recruitment of women.*

### Lessons learnt from non-governmental organizations

Since the programmes implemented by NGOs are often a response to particular circumstances within a given community, they offer valuable lessons on how girls and women can be given greater access to educational opportunities. *Successful NGOs should be encouraged to continue the work they do with remote and deprived groups.* Ways have to be found of strengthening partnerships both between governments and NGOs and among NGOs themselves. Special units in ministries of education could, for example, acknowledge, co-ordinate and monitor the assistance provided by NGOs to basic education. It should be possible to assess their contributions to the national education system. Recognized NGOs should also be given access to educational grants and credit to help them to extend their services to deprived groups.





### Strengthening research, partnerships and information networks

Policy making at all levels needs to be supported by valid research and by more precise data related to gender to determine more accurately and to address the needs of, girls and women. Research methods must be reviewed to ensure that they do not discriminate against women. Participatory research techniques, for example, rather than the use of standardized questionnaires, may be better adapted to obtaining reliable information on the lives of women. In general the impact of macro-economic and state policies on women's education must be carefully analyzed. All development projects should be assessed from the point of view of gender.

For research capacity to be improved *partnerships* between governments, institutions and organizations involved in women's education and development programmes should be established. Means have to be found whereby communication between researchers, policy-makers and NGOs is increased. *The results of research should be more widely disseminated in a variety of ways so that they reach even the remotest areas and are easily understood by illiterate men and women.*

In view of the progress that has been made in dealing with gender issues, *research needs to be carried out on those concepts which need to be put into practice but about which little information is available in developing countries.* For example frequent reference is made to the importance of gender sensitivity in education, but this concept is still to be translated into concrete programmes of action. Guidance and counselling for rural girls undoubtedly require a new body of relevant knowledge as well as a new approach. Well designed and executed research programmes can contribute to an improvement in the status of girls and women in ways which are meaningful to both sexes.

Organizations such as Rotary International and Kiwanis can be invited to assist

national and international efforts directed at the development of educational opportunities for girls and women, particularly for out-of-school girls. Well known personalities (such as film stars) can sponsor the preparation and production of stories that are of interest to young readers in rural areas. The media can be more active in marketing their products and in promoting literacy. Women's associations should be encouraged to mobilize rural women and to establish branches of which they can become politically active and aware members.

Effective *monitoring of progress in the development of girls' and women's education* demands open channels of communication among planners, administrators and members of local organizations. It would be useful to evaluate those experiences already gained in incorporating gender issues into both formal and non-formal education programmes. Countries need to identify the key performance indicators used for monitoring progress in the achievement of equal opportunities for males and females in education. The Manual for Monitoring Girls' and Women's Education prepared by UNESCO as a follow-up to the Pan-African Conference on the Education of Girls, held in Burkina Faso in March 1993, would be a useful reference document. Permanent monitoring groups should be set up to promote female education and to make policy makers aware of the importance of female education. This task could be undertaken by regional bodies such as The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), by ministries, by Equal Employment Officers in higher education institutions as well as by IGOs and NGOs.

The existing networks must be reinforced so that information is circulated in an effective and efficient manner. In general information networks in developing countries are of an uneven standard. *A careful investigation into information networks needs to be carried out and ways of improving and maintaining them explored.* As far as possible links with the national mass media should be established. These networks should be given responsibility

for maintaining public interest in equality issues. The dissemination of information on matters of gender should be considered a public service and should be given the time required in the media as is the case with other messages sent out by the government.

### Mobilizing further resources

*Any serious commitment to the improvement of educational opportunities for girls and women must be reflected in national plans and budgets.* Many governments face severe economic constraints but more efficient use of the existing resources would enable them to offer more and better quality education. Investment choices have to be made by governments. They can either continue to buy costly arms for the destruction of human life and resources or they can improve the social and economic conditions of their people by investing in their welfare. International loan agencies such as The World Bank should consider the provision of special incentives to governments which drastically reduce their investment in arms and use their savings for women's programmes and projects. Such action would provide concrete proof of a commitment on the part of both governments

and agencies to the improvement of the status of poor girls and women.

For developing countries in 1992 an average of 4.1 per cent GNP was spent on education. But there are at least 51 countries for which the proportion of GNP spent on education is less than 4 per cent. Nineteen of them are in Asia and seventeen in Africa. A concerted effort by such countries is required with the aid of donor agencies, particularly those concerned with structural adjustment, to increase the amount of investment in national education by the end of the decade. It is not only a matter of increasing the proportion of GNP allocated to the education sector. Measures are also needed to ensure that any additional resources are used for the benefit of girls and women.

In accordance with the recommendations of the UNDP Human Development Report for 1994, the re-allocation of costs for military resources to programmes for the improvement of the status of girls and women, would contribute considerably to the creation of a climate of peace. *The International Monetary Fund and The World Bank, which are the leading advisers on macro-economic policies, must play a more active role in helping governments to devote more of their resources to human development and, in particular, to the needs of girls and women.*

# How to make it work

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The strategies presented are, for the most part, those recommended by governments and the international community at various meetings. There have been many recommendations and now is the time to speed up action in ways that are clear to all and which permit the monitoring and evaluation of their effectiveness to be carried out.

In recent years governments have made efforts, both alone and with the support of agencies, to increase the number of educational opportunities available to women. But in view of the size of the gender gaps which still remain, particularly in rural and deprived areas, the action taken has clearly been inadequate.



Both governments and multilateral and bilateral agencies can use their planning mechanisms and mandates more effectively to address the needs of women and on a scale that is commensurate with the size of the problems to be addressed. National plans of action for improving the status of girls and women should be based on national development plans and should receive budgetary allocations as well as the political and technical supervision accorded to national development plans.

Multilateral and bilateral agencies have their own instruments for co-operation with governments. Within country programmes, agreements or national action plans, priorities can be negotiated and resources allocated for programmes which improve the status of girls and women. Direct support can be given to women's associations and to NGOs for the purpose of helping women.

By the year 2000, there should be another review to determine what has been done and by whom and by what means. The fundamental purpose of such a review would be to identify the most effective approaches to be used in the second half of the decade.

Co-ordination needs to be strengthened among the various aid agencies in order to promote women's education. The Donors for African Education Female Working Group is an example of how donors can encourage, and to some extent, direct resources towards the education of girls and women. In some countries the donor community has established Women in Development (WID) sub-groups,



which guide and monitor activities in the interest of females. Such initiatives should be adopted in all countries and the WID sub-groups should be authorised to monitor and evaluate the investments of donors in activities intended to improve the social and economic status of women.

### Fundamental national commitment

One of the most urgent challenges facing education today is to provide girls and women with the confidence, skills and knowledge that enable them to make choices and to participate fully in development.

This is not just a matter of legislation. It also requires profound changes in attitudes that can only be brought about by means of a critical review of present methods of teaching, learning and interacting. The increased participation of girls and women in education and in decision-making requires positive intervention programmes and the strengthening of women's ability in all spheres. The provision of training which takes into account the needs of women is essential for parents, teachers, fieldworkers, administrators, policy makers and many others and it should lead to a greater awareness of the importance of girls' and women's education and develop a change in attitudes. A more equitable society cannot be developed without greater female involvement and power-sharing in both the public and private spheres.

Competent women researchers, women's associations and special advocacy groups can assist in creating a greater recognition of the importance of girls' and women's education and can assist women to have confidence in their future and to create an environment which is favourable to their social and economic progress. The content and quality of education should be such that it lays a foundation for a society in which girls and women are regarded as equal partners in its development and where both sexes have access to learning in science and technology at all levels of education.

Progress is hazardous in times of economic and social restructuring. Girls and women have been among the most disadvantaged groups in society and have been the principal victims of structural adjustment programmes and rapid technological change. Education cannot be isolated from social, economic and cultural considerations. On the contrary it must be seen as one of the most vital and influential pre-requisites of sustainable development, because it deals with skills, values, attitudes and knowledge. It is also a long-term investment demanding sustained commitment on the part of communities, governments and donors. A follow-up review of the efforts made to increase the participation of women and girls in education at the end of the century would not only make The World Conference on Women a point of reference and a platform for action, but it would highlight the urgent need to achieve the goals set at the end of the first half of this decade.

**Annex I Situation of girls and women in Asia and Oceania:  
Latest year available**

REGIONS/COUNTRIES	ILLITERACY RATE		GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO				% OF FEMALE TEACHERS		EDU. EXP. AS % OF GNP	WOMEN IN LABOUR FORCE (%)
	1995		FIRST LEVEL		SECOND LEVEL		LEVEL I	LEVEL II		
	M	F	M	F	M	F				
EAST ASIA/OCEANIA										
Brunei Darussalam	7.4	16.6	111	104	70	73	58	46	na	na
Cambodia	52.0	78.0	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
China	10.1	27.3	120	116	59	48	44	34	1.7	43
Fiji	19.0	37.3	128	127	59	62	56	46	5.6	19
Hong Kong	4.0	11.8	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	37
Indonesia	10.4	22.0	116	112	47	39	51	na	2.2	40
Korea, Dem. Rep. of	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	46
Korea, Republic of	0.7	7.4	100	102	92	93	54	36	4.4	40
Laos People's Dem. Rep.	30.6	55.6	119	89	27	17	41	28	na	45
Malaysia	10.9	21.9	93	93	58	62	58	54	5.5	36
Mongolia	11.4	22.8	95	100	na	na	58	na	8.5	45
Myanmar	11.3	22.3	107	104	23	23	65	na	na	37
Papua New Guinea	26.2	49.1	80	67	15	10	34	33	na	39
Philippines	5.0	5.7	111	111	na	na	na	na	2.9	37
Singapore	4.1	13.7	109	107	70	71	71	na	3.4	40
Thailand	4.0	12.5	93	92	34	32	na	na	3.6	47
Viet Nam	3.5	8.8	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	47
SOUTH ASIA										
Afghanistan	52.8	85.0	46	16	11	6	na	na	na	8
Bangladesh	61.5	73.9	84	73	25	12	19	10	2.3	41
Bhutan	43.8	71.9	na	na	na	na	na	na	3.4	32
India	34.5	62.3	112	89	60	37	29	na	3.9	29
Iran	22.3	40.7	109	101	70	54	55	41	4.6	10
Maldives	6.7	7.0	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	20
Nepal	59.1	86.0	130	87	47	24	15	12	2.0	34
Pakistan	50.0	75.6	57	30	29	13	33	32	2.7	14
Sri Lanka	6.6	12.8	106	105	71	78	80	59	3.3	33

Sources: Statistical Yearbook 1994, UNESCO  
Human Development Report 1994, UNDP

**Annex 2A Situation of girls and women in the Arab States:  
Latest year available**

ARAB STATES	NET ENROLMENT RATIO LEVEL I		GENDER GAP (M - F)	GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO LEVEL I		GENDER GAP (M - F)	GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO LEVEL II		GENDER GAP (M - F)	EDU. EXP. % OF GNP (%)	WOMEN IN LABOUR FORCE (%)
	(%)			(%)			(%)				
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F			
Algeria	99	89	10	111	96	15	58	48	10	5.7	4
Bahrain	89	91	-2	109	112	-3	98	100	-2	5.0	18
Djibouti	34	26	8	41	31	10	na	na	na	na	na
Egypt	95	82	13	105	89	16	88	71	17	5.0	29
Iraq	83	74	9	98	83	15	44	29	15	5.1	6
Jordan	89	89	0	94	95	-1	51	55	-4	4.0	10
Kuwait	81	75	6	65	65	0	55	55	0	6.0	24
Lebanon	87	90	-3	120	116	4	67	71	-4	2.0	27
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	98	96	2	107	104	3	na	na	na	9.6	9
Mauritania	42	32	10	76	62	14	20	10	10	na	22
Morocco	73	53	20	85	60	25	40	29	11	5.8	26
Oman	74	72	2	87	82	5	68	61	7	3.8	8
Qatar	81	80	1	92	87	5	86	91	-5	3.0	7
Saudi Arabia	65	57	8	78	73	5	56	46	10	6.8	7
Somalia	9	5	4	na	na	na	na	na	na	0.4	39
Sudan	42	33	9	59	45	14	23	19	4	4.8	29
Syrian Arab Rep	100	91	9	111	99	12	54	43	11	4.2	18
Tunisia	100	95	5	123	113	10	53	45	8	5.9	21
Unitted Arab Emirates	100	99	1	112	108	4	69	76	-7	1.9	6
Yemen	61	40	21	112	37	75	51	10	41	4.6	13

Sources : Statistical Yearbook 1994, UNESCO.  
Human Development Report 1994, UNDP.  
World Population Prospects 1992 Revision, United Nations.

**Annex 2B Situation of girls and women  
in the Arab States:  
(1992 or latest year available)**

COUNTRY/REGION	TOTAL POPULATION	ADULT ILLITERATES		ILLITERATE WOMEN PER 100 MEN	ILLITERACY RATES (15+ YEARS)	
	(MILLION)	('000)		(F/M)	M	F
		M	F			
ARAB STATES						
Algeria	28.6	2,249	4,333	193	26	51
Bahrain	0.6	25	31	125	11	21
Djibouti	0.5	65	115	176	40	67
Egypt	58.5	7,205	11,749	163	36	61
Iraq	21.2	1,715	3,133	183	29	55
Jordan	4.8	105	309	295	7	21
Kuwait	1.6	83	117	142	18	25
Lebanon	3.0	50	101	201	5	10
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	5.4	189	513	271	12	37
Mauritania	2.3	319	487	153	50	74
Morocco	28.3	3,714	6,016	162	43	69
Oman	1.8	na	na	na	na	na
Qatar	0.5	60	22	37	21	20
Saudi Arabia	17.6	1,740	2,131	122	28	50
Somalia	10.2	1,280	1,723	135	65	86
Sudan	29.0	3,327	5,180	156	42	65
Syrian Arab Rep	14.8	556	1,703	307	14	44
Tunisia	8.9	621	1,309	211	21	45
United Arab Emirates	1.8	192	80	42	21	20
Yemen	13.9	920	1,480	161	47	74

Sources : Statistical Yearbook 1994, UNESCO.  
Human Development Report 1994, UNDP.  
World Population Prospects 1992 Revision, United Nations.

**Annex 3 Situation of girls and women  
in Latin America and the Caribbean:  
Latest year available**

REGIONS/COUNTRIES	ILLITERACY RATE		GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO				% OF FEMALE TEACHERS		EDU. EXP. AS % OF GNP	WOMEN IN LABOUR FORCE (%)
	1995		FIRST LEVEL		SECOND LEVEL		LEVEL I	LEVEL II		
	M	F	M	F	M	F				
LATIN AMERICA/CARIBBEAN										
Argentina	3.8	3.8	108	107	67	74	91	na	3.1	28
Bahamas	1.5	2.0	93	96	94	92	na	na	na	47
Barbados	2.0	3.2	105	105	93	81	72	na	7.9	48
Belize	na	na	111	107	na	na	71	46	5.8	33
Bolivia	9.5	24.0	99	90	37	31	57	49	2.7	41
Brazil	26.7	26.8	101	97	31	36	na	na	4.6	36
British Virgin Island	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Chile	5.6	5.0	99	98	68	72	73	53	2.9	32
Colombia	8.8	8.6	118	120	56	67	80	na	3.1	43
Costa Rica	4.3	5.0	106	105	45	49	80	na	4.5	30
Cuba	3.8	4.7	104	104	79	89	73	49	6.6	32
Dominica	na	na	na	na	na	na	72	na	5.8	42
Dominican Republic	18.0	17.8	95	96	na	na	na	na	1.6	15
Ecuador	8.0	8.8	119	117	55	57	na	na	2.7	26
El Salvador	26.5	30.2	79	80	25	26	69	na	1.6	45
Grenada	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	49
Guatemala	37.5	51.4	84	73	20	17	na	na	1.2	26
Guyana	1.4	2.5	113	111	56	59	na	na	4.7	21
Haiti	52.0	57.8	58	54	22	21	45	na	1.8	40
Honduras	27.4	27.3	111	112	27	34	74	na	4	31
Jamaica	19.2	10.9	109	108	59	66	na	na	4.1	47
Mexico	8.2	12.6	114	110	56	56	na	na	5.2	31
Netherlands Antilles	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Nicaragua	35.4	33.4	101	105	40	45	86	57	4.1	33
Panama	8.6	9.8	108	104	59	64	na	54	5.5	29
Paraguay	6.5	9.4	111	108	33	34	55	67	1.9	41
Peru	5.5	17.0	125	120	66	60	na	na	1.5	39
Puerto Rico	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Saint Kitts and Nevis	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	79	56	2.8
Saint Lucia	na	na	na	na	na	na	82	62	na	na
Saint Vincent	na	na	na	na	na	na	67	52	6.7	na
Surinam	4.9	9.0	na	na	na	na	na	na	8.3	41
Trinidad and Tobago	1.2	3.0	95	95	78	80	72	na	4	36
Uruguay	3.1	2.3	108	107	61	62	na	na	2.8	41
Venezuela	8.2	9.7	95	97	29	40	74	52	5.2	32

Sources: Statistical Yearbook 1994, UNESCO  
Human Development Report 1994, UNDP



**Annex 4A Situation of girls and women  
in the least developed countries:  
Latest year available**

LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES	NET ENROLMENT RATIO		GENDER GAP (M - F)	GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO		GENDER GAP (M - F)	GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO		EDU. EXP. % OF GNP (%)	WOMEN IN LABOUR FORCE (%)
	LEVEL I (%)			LEVEL I (%)			LEVEL II (%)			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Afghanistan	42	14	28	46	16	30	na	na	2.0	8
Angola	48	46	2	95	87	8	na	na	na	39
Bangladesh	74	66	8	84	73	11	25	12	2.3	41
Benin	71	35	36	88	44	44	17	7	na	24
Bhutan	23	16	7	na	na	na	na	na	3.4	32
Burkina Faso	38	24	14	47	30	17	11	6	1.6	49
Burundi	56	47	9	76	62	14	8	5	3.7	53
Cambodia	52	42	10	na	na	na	na	na	na	56
Cape Verde	100	99	1	125	119	6	20	19	4.1	37
C.A. Republic	71	46	25	88	55	33	17	7	2.8	47
Chad	57	28	29	89	41	48	12	3	2.3	17
Comoros	55	46	9	81	69	12	22	15	na	41
Djibouti	34	26	8	41	31	10	15	12	na	na
Equatorial Guinea	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	1.7	36
Ethiopia	21	18	3	27	19	8	11	10	4.9	41
Gambia	64	46	18	79	56	23	27	14	2.7	41
Guinea	34	17	17	61	30	31	17	6	2.2	30
Guinea-Bissau	50	29	21	77	42	35	9	4	2.8	42
Haiti	25	26	-1	58	54	4	22	21	1.8	40
Kiribati	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Lao PDR	71	57	14	119	89	30	27	17	1.2	45
Lesotho	59	71	-12	90	105	-15	22	31	6.4	44
Liberia	26	14	12	51	28	23	na	na	5.7	31
Madagascar	60	59	1	75	72	3	16	15	1.5	40
Malawi	52	48	4	80	84	-4	5	3	3.4	51
Maldives	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	20
Mali	23	14	9	38	24	14	10	5	3.2	32
Mauritania	42	32	10	76	62	14	20	10	na	22
Mozambique	46	35	11	69	51	18	9	5	6.2	48
Myanmar	99	93	6	107	104	3	23	23	2.4	37
Nepal	80	44	36	130	87	43	47	24	2.0	34
Niger	32	18	14	35	21	14	9	4	3.1	47
Rwanda	71	71	0	78	76	2	11	9	3.8	54
Samoa	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	4.2	na
Sao Tome and Principe	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	4.3	na
Sierra Leone	47	34	13	60	42	na	21	12	1.4	33
Solomon Island	na	na	na	102	87	15	na	na	4.2	na
Somalia	9	5	4	15	8	7	na	na	0.4	39
Sudan	42	33	9	59	45	14	23	19	4.8	29
Tanzania	50	51	-1	71	69	2	6	5	5.0	48
Togo	89	62	27	134	87	47	35	12	5.6	37
Tuvalu	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Uganda	66	59	7	78	63	15	na	na	1.7	41
Vanuatu	na	na	na	105	107	-2	na	na	4.5	46
Yemen	61	40	21	112	37	75	na	na	4.6	13
Zaire	60	47	13	78	58	20	na	na	1.0	36
Zambia	61	62	-1	101	92	9	na	na	2.3	29

Sources: Statistical Yearbook 1994, UNESCO.  
Human Development Report 1994, UNDP.  
World Population Prospects, 1992 Revision, United Nations.

**Annex 4B Situation of girls and women  
in the least developed countries:  
(1992 or latest year available)**

COUNTRY/REGION	TOTAL POPULATION	ADULT ILLITERATES		ILLITERATE WOMEN PER 100 MEN	ILLITERACY RATES (15+ YEARS)	
	(Million)	('000)		(F/M)	M	F
		M	F			
<b>LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES</b>						
Afghanistan	23.2	3,229	4,940	153	53	85
Angola	11.1	1,226	1,987	162	44	71
Bangladesh	128.3	19,057	26,025	137	51	74
Benin	5.4	713	1,079	151	51	74
Bhutan	1.7	211	347	164	44	72
Burkina Faso	10.4	1,972	2,625	133	71	91
Burundi	6.3	835	1,386	166	51	78
Cambodia	9.4	1,392	2,086	150	52	78
Cape Verde	0.4	19	46	242	19	36
C.A. Republic	3.4	285	475	167	32	48
Chad	6.4	666	1,202	180	38	65
Comoros	0.7	60	83	138	36	50
Djibouti	0.5	65	115	177	40	67
Equatorial Guinea	0.4	11	37	336	10	32
Ethiopia	58.0	8,099	10,953	135	54	75
Gambia	1.0	152	251	165	47	75
Guinea	6.7	886	1,386	156	50	78
Guinea-Bissau	1.1	97	185	191	32	58
Haiti	7.2	1,075	1,285	120	52	58
Kiribati	0.1	na	na	na	na	na
Lao PDR	4.9	402	768	191	31	56
Lesotho	2.0	108	231	214	19	38
Liberia	3.0	381	632	166	46	78
Madagascar	14.2	407	698	221	12	27
Malawi	11.3	803	1,783	222	28	58
Maldives	0.2	5	5	100	7	7
Mali	10.8	1,668	2,249	135	61	77
Mauritania	2.3	319	487	153	50	74
Mozambique	18.4	1,828	3,470	190	42	77
Myanmar	48.5	1,617	3,296	204	11	22
Nepal	22.1	3,762	5,387	143	59	86
Niger	9.1	1,825	2,256	124	79	93
Rwanda	8.3	635	1,060	167	30	48
Samoa	0.2	na	na	na	na	na
Sao-Tome and Principe	0.1	na	na	na	na	na
Sierra Leone	4.7	668	1,059	159	55	82
Solomon Island	0.4	na	na	na	na	na
Somalia	10.2	1,280	1,723	135	65	86
Sudan	29.0	3,327	5,180	156	42	65
Tanzania	30.7	1,618	3,553	220	21	43
Togo	4.1	363	722	199	33	63
Tuvalu	0.0	na	na	na	na	na
Uganda	20.4	1,409	2,782	196	26	50
Vanuatu	0.2	na	na	na	na	na
Yemen Republic	13.7	920	1,480	161	47	74
Zaire	43.8	1,491	3,783	254	13	32
Zambia	9.4	346	736	213	14	29

Sources : Statistical Yearbook 1994, UNESCO.  
Human Development Report 1994, UNDP.  
World Population Prospects 1992 Revision, United Nations.

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