

## **GENDER & THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION**

<b>Learning Objectives:</b>	Students will: explore the barriers to education for boys and girls; examine factors impeding girls' access to education; identify the importance of investing in girl's education; and employ critical thinking skills.
<b>Time:</b>	80 Minutes
<b>Group Size:</b>	25 to 30
<b>Strategies:</b>	Group discussion, Think Pair Share, Consensus building; writing reflections, role play, group debrief
<b>Materials:</b>	Sticky notes, markers, pencils, laptop and projector, photocopied handouts and Role Play Cards
<b>Prep:</b>	Cue or download the <i>The Girl Effect</i> Youtube video from the Internet <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53yuF64UgSM">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53yuF64UgSM</a>  Photocopy <u>Fact Sheet: <i>Is This Fair?</i></u> for each pair of students  Photocopy <u>Gender Role Play Cards</u> for each pair of students

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### **PART 1**

#### **Introduction (30 - 60 minutes)**

##### **Four Corners**

Announce to students that all the schools in their community have been closed until further notice and without explanation. Ask: What is your reaction to this (hypothetical) situation?

Ask students to move to one of four corners of the room representing their reaction (put signs on the wall):

1. Ecstatic: this is the best thing that could happen!
2. A little bit happy: could be fun for a while, but what if it goes on a long time?
3. Disappointed: you were looking forward to some great school events that you are participating in.
4. Dejected: this is the worst thing that could happen, especially when you're working on your grades and big assignments are due.

Once students have chosen a corner, allow 5 minutes for small groups to discuss why they made this choice. Each group will elect a spokesperson to share their reasoning with the rest of the class. *Note: This is just a sharing of ideas, do not allow others to respond, judge or debate the reasoning.* After all groups have spoken, ask if anyone would like to change groups. Then do a head count of the numbers in each group and record them on the board to return to and review later.

### **Schools Out Brainstorming Exercise**

Share the following statistics from the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report 2010 with the class:

- In 2008 there were 67 million primary school-aged children out of school
- 28 million of these (42%) live in conflict affected countries
- In sub-Saharan Africa, 10 million children drop out of school every year.

Working in small groups, ask students what they know about why children in developing countries do not go to school. Write down each idea on a sticky note, the more the better. Instruct students to stick these up on the board or wall. Read out the sticky notes and ask class to decide whether the reason applies mostly to girls, boys, or both. Organize the sticky notes into the three categories. This will provide a visual profile of access to education for girls and boys. Use the following discussion questions to prompt discussion\*:

- **What do you think kids are doing if they aren't in school?**
- **How might one's gender affect access to education and enrollment?**
- **What prevents girls from going to school?**
- **How might getting to school be different for girls and boys?**
- **List the benefits of investing in girls' education. List the benefits of investing in boys' education. Are the benefits different?**

*\*Note to Teachers: Students will likely draw on their own experiences in this discussion, rather than considering what kids in developing countries might be doing. Guide them to think about the developing world context as well.*

### **Is this Fair? Video & Fact Sheet Discussion:**

Follow this activity by showing the Youtube video: *The Girl Effect* and distributing the Fact Sheet: *Is This Fair?*

Barriers to education exist for both boys and girls. Engage in a discussion with the class about barriers to education on account of gender. What barriers do boys face? What barriers do girls face? How do they compare? Why is the situation worse for girls than

boys? What factors in the video illustrate this (e.g. HIV and AIDS, hunger, conflict)? What does “opportunity cost” mean when referring to girl’s education? Discuss the following quote:

*“Girls suffer more from the effects of poverty because it costs more to educate a girl than a boy – it is the cost of tuition plus the “opportunity cost” or the cost to the family of the loss of her labour with the household, in the field, and at the marketplace. The opportunity cost for boys is not as high”* (Source: Keeping the Promise: 5 Benefits to Girls Secondary Education).

Class reflection: Ask students to write down their response to the following quotation by Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary General: “study after study has taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls. To educate girls is to reduce poverty”. Partner with another classmate and share your notes. Review the 5 main benefits of girls’ secondary education from the Fact Sheet *Is this Fair?* and discuss why investing in girls’ education is important.

For more statistics visit INEE Pocket Guide to Gender at:

[http://www.ineesite.org/index.php/post/member\\_inee\\_pocket\\_guide\\_to\\_gender/](http://www.ineesite.org/index.php/post/member_inee_pocket_guide_to_gender/)

## **PART 2**

### **Gender Role play Activity (35 minutes)**

In this facilitated role play activity students work in pairs\* The goal or aim of this activity is to create awareness about gender inequality and to identify some of the barriers that girls face in accessing education.

**Step 1** - Distribute one set of role play cards to each pair. Instruct one student to take on the ‘A’ role and the other to take on the ‘B’ role. Give students a few minutes to read and reflect on their roles, then let the role play begin. Remind students to act out their roles as if they were in their character’s shoes. Give students enough space, time and privacy to fully explore these role plays.

**Step 2** - After a few minutes stop the role play action by calling out “Freeze!” Ask for two or three pairs to volunteer their feelings about the role play.

**Step 3** – Resume the role play. After a few more minutes, call “Freeze!” again. Instruct students to exchange cards and reverse roles. Continue for a few more minutes, then move on to engage reflection and debrief in PART 3.

*\*Note to Teachers: The impact of the gender will differ according to the make-up of the pairs. Girl-boy pairs can develop awareness of the other gender’s experience, as well as notions of gender equality with regards to education. Girl-girl pairs can explore personal convictions and experiences and relate them to girls’ experiences with school in poor countries. Boy-boy pairs can explore an empathetic position of what it’s like to be a girl and experience gender discrimination. All students will become aware of the roadblocks that girls in developing countries face in getting access to education.*

Sources: Fountain, S (1991). *Gender Issues: An Activity File*. Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes

GCE website stories: <http://www.campaignforeducation.org/en/why-education-for-all/real-lives/>

### **PART 3**

#### **Reflection & Debrief (20 minutes)**

Facilitate a debrief after the role play activity using the following questions. Students can share in small groups and present one or two key ideas to the larger group. Ask them to share what they feel are their most original insights or ideas.

- What did you learn from doing this activity?
- What were your thoughts and feelings in the role of the girl? Of the boy? How did the plot of your role play change when you played the part of the other gender?
- What factors make it challenging for girls to go to school? Consider political, social, economic, and cultural factors. Also think of factors that manifest at the family, community and country level.
- At the end of the role play, what advice would you give to your character? What in his/her situation could be changed? Who or what needs to intervene to make that change possible?

#### **Taking Action: From Problems to Opportunities**

Many interventions and educational initiatives have made a difference in improving access to education, such as the Education for All (EFA) initiative. Primary school enrollment is on the rise, with the total number of out of school children dropping from 103 million to 67 million.

- What can communities, governments, and aid organizations do to improve girls' access to education?
- Revisit your responses to the School's Out hypothetical situation. Compare your experiences and perspectives on education to those of young people in developing countries? What privileges or rights do you have that they do not?
- As students, how can you leverage your privileges and right in your school and community to raise awareness about the issue of girls' access to education?
- Brainstorm an action that you, your class or school can do for Global Action Week. Go to the Canadian Global Campaign for Education's website for information on the 2011 Big Story action and consider becoming involved. Be sure to link your activities to Global Action Week 2011 at <http://www.cgce.ca/gaw-about>.

## Further Reading

Education for All website: <http://www.unesco.org/en/efareport/about-the-report/efa-development-goals>.

Academy for Educational Development's Centre for Gender Equity:  
<http://cge.aed.org/>.

Keeping The Promise Presentation : The Importance of Investing in Both Primary and Secondary Education: <http://cge.aed.org/Publications/CGE.cfm>.

Path to Promise Video: Girls Making the Grade:  
<http://www.aed.org/News/Multimedia/Paths-to-Promise.cfm>.

CIDA's Gender Equality Policy: [http://www.sice.oas.org/Genderandtrade/CIDA\\_GENDER-E\\_Policies.pdf](http://www.sice.oas.org/Genderandtrade/CIDA_GENDER-E_Policies.pdf)

Education For Girls website: <http://educationforgirls.org/>

Youtube video: The Girl Effect: The Clock is Ticking  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1e8xgF0JtVg&feature=rec-LGOUT-exp\\_fresh+div-1r-1-HM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1e8xgF0JtVg&feature=rec-LGOUT-exp_fresh+div-1r-1-HM)

The Girl Effect Toolkit: <http://www.girleffect.org/mobilize/share-it>.

UNICEF International Women's Day Podcast: [http://www.unicef.org/gender/index\\_52934.html](http://www.unicef.org/gender/index_52934.html).

UNDP Thematic Paper on MDG 3: Promote Gender Equality & Empower Women:  
[http://www.undg.org/docs/11421/MDG3\\_1954-UNDG-MDG3-LR.pdf](http://www.undg.org/docs/11421/MDG3_1954-UNDG-MDG3-LR.pdf).

World Vision's No Forced Marriage Report:  
<http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/radio.nsf/0/D84744DF2D205BED8825742D006BEB2F?OpenDocument>.

INEE Pocket Guide to Gender (Missing Out cards)  
[http://www.ineesite.org/index.php/post/member\\_inee\\_pocket\\_guide\\_to\\_gender/](http://www.ineesite.org/index.php/post/member_inee_pocket_guide_to_gender/).

## Resources Used

EFA website: [http://www.educationfasttrack.org/media/library/factsheet\\_basic.pdf](http://www.educationfasttrack.org/media/library/factsheet_basic.pdf)

Fountain, S (1991). *Gender Issues: An Activity File*. Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes

The Mother and Child Health and Education Fund website: <http://educationforgirls.org/>.

Rihani, M (2006). *Keeping the Promise: Five Benefits of Girls' Secondary Education*. Academy for Educational Development. Washington: AED