United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Basic Data

Primary Education Enrolment			Secondary Education Enrolment			Adult Literacy (15 and over)	
M	F	GPI[1]	M	F	GPI	M	F
82%	83%	1.01	51%	48%	0.94	91%	84%

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report statistical tables (school year ending in 2009).

Girls' education

Over the last decade, Kenya has made significant progress in education, achieving gender parity in primary education enrollment and near parity at secondary level. However, as the above data show, gender parity does not mean that universal access to primary education has been achieved and enrolment in secondary education remains low for both boys (51%) and girls (48%). This is of a particular concern for girls, as the data imply, over half of secondary school-age girls are not enrolled in secondary education.

Women's literacy

Women's literacy rate has significantly increased as a result of positive government policies and strategies. However, despite progress in education as a whole, gender disparity remains a challenge as 16% of women in Kenya still lack basic literacy skills, compared with 9% of men. The failure to promote and retain girls in secondary education is probably one factor negatively affecting the slow progress in women's literacy.

Challenges and Issues

One of the main reasons for the low enrollment of girls in secondary education is the persistent high level of poverty, especially in urban slums and rural areas. Most families are unable to cover the cost of their children's education and opportunity costs for sending children to school are high. Furthermore, as socio-cultural norms based on patriarchy prevail, families tend to give priority to boys' education when faced with financial constraints.

In addition, factors such as lack of adequate infrastructure, inadequate guidelines for policy implementation, as well as prevalence of HIV and AIDS, have prevented girls from accessing education.

Along with the need to rapidly expand the provision of secondary education, the quality of education at

[1]The gender parity index (GPI) is the ratio of female to male values of a given indicator. A GPI of 1 indicates parity between sexes.

secondary level has been a major concern. Even when girls are enrolled in secondary schools, many do not complete the cycle due to gender-insensitive teaching practices as well as shortage of female teachers as role models. According to the Kenyan EFA Assessment report (Draft, 2012)[2], the gender parity index (GPI) for the teaching force in 2010 was 0.85 at primary education level and at 0.60 at secondary, indicating a relatively male-dominated teaching force, especially at the secondary education level. Moreover, gender disparities to the disadvantage of girls in learning achievement in mathematics were evident in the 2000 SACMEQ report[3].

Gender-sensitive training of teachers and school principal for girls' and women's access, participation, and advancement in mathematics, science and technology education

The project G*ender-sensitive training of teachers and school principals for girls' and women's access, participation, and advancement in mathematics, science and technology education* was initiated in March 2011, following an agreement established with GEMS Foundation for a total amount of US$ 1 million over a period of four years.

The purpose of the project is to improve girls' and women's access to and advancement in the learning and teaching of sciences, mathematics and technology in Kenya and Lesotho (see Lesotho's Fact Sheet) and contribute towards the achievement of gender parity and equality in education. Through the provision of gender-sensitive training for teachers and school principals, the project will enhance the teaching of mathematics, science, and technology using creative pedagogies. It will also reinforce the role of school leadership in promoting the participation and advancement of girls and women in scientific domains.

Involving the broader community in the programme implementation process will be one of the innovative characteristics of the approach. To this end the project will aim to identify in-school and out-of-school constraints to enrolment, participation and achievement of girls' and women in science, mathematics and technology education; empower school principals - with a focus on females - to assume leadership roles in addressing female teachers' needs and creating linkages with decision-makers and the community; empower science, mathematics and technology teachers through acquisition of pedagogical skills (including peer review, mentoring, counseling and role models) in order to attract and ensure effective participation of girls in science, mathematics and technology. The target beneficiaries of this initiative are teacher educators/trainers in science, mathematics and technology from the institutions providing pre-service and in -service teacher education and training; the principals of the selected schools and their deputies; teachers in charge of the teaching of mathematics, science and technology in selected secondary schools (at least five schools); trainees from teacher training institutions, and divisions responsible for teacher education, curriculum development and planning.

As of April 2012, the project's activities have started in Kenya with the identification of the teacher training institutions.

[2]Kenya EFA Assessment, 2012, the Government of Kenya (Draft report).
[3]SAITO, M. (2010). SACMEQ - *Has gender equality in reading and mathematics achievement improved?*