

**Oasis International School Model United Nations**

Status of Women

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Guiding Package

**Topic 2:** Providing education for women in developing countries.

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***Abstract:***

Women all over the world face injustices of all sorts, from their work to their basic right of getting education. In order for women to become members of society, they need proper education to get an equal opportunity to serve their community as any other citizen. Since the beginning of time women didn’t have access to actual education, they were only learning how to become eligible wives for their future husbands. They were taught how to cook, clean and manage a house but never proper education. After this time a lot of women began fighting for their education but a lot of countries remain behind in women's education. Therefore, fighting and ensuring that these women get their rights must be discussed for change to happen.

Women’s education does not only serve women to participate in society, but also it helps them raise educated kids and healthy families. It was proven that Children whose mothers receive secondary schooling are twice as likely to receive vaccinations against major disease, promoting better health outcomes for the entire community.

Providing education for women helps economic growth and can provide productivity and higher incomes, it also reduces the poverty rate.

Throughout history a lot of women fought for their basic right to education. Some women were shot, and others killed. Women shouldn’t have to fight this hard for an education, it is a basic human right. Until now we accept to live in a world with countries that deny women access to education, which results in problems that have bad consequences on our society and excludes women from our society.

***Introduction:***

According to Unicef,129 million girls worldwide are out of school. These girls are forbidden from their human right of education because of different factors such as poverty and tradition, a right that majorly affects the way they live their lives, as education is not only our way to success but it’s also the basis of how we choose to live our lives and make our decisions. Globally, only 39% of women in rural areas attend countries, which is extremely problematic for developing countries, such as countries in Africa where 70-90% of people live in rural areas.

Education in general has always been a challenge in developing countries because of the lack of resources that are available to focus on education’s development, which is made even worse because of the present gender gap in literacy and school enrollment.

Women in developing countries face many inequalities due to misogynistic traditions and beliefs embedded in the of the country, sadly these traditions are normalised. For example, in India where it is normalised for little girls to get married, estimates suggest that each year, **at least 1.5 million girls under 18** get married in India. In other countries that are ruled by an organization, such as Afghanistan, women have lost almost all their rights - their right to speak, dress freely, or education- because an concervative islamic organization took over their government and suspended women from all their rights.

25% of all girls in developing countries have not completed their primary school, due to multiple factors such as financial insecurity and cultural reasons such as gender norms and tradition. In most countries, families expect from women to marry young and continue their lives as caretakers for their children and husband. Hence, they don’t bother to send them to school, and prioritize instead teaching girls how to maintain a household over their education. Multiple countries have a much higher percentage of girls that are not enrolled in schools. 73% of girls in South Sudan do not attend primary school.

Girls who receive education are more likely to marry late, as every 12 years of education drastically reduces the likelihood of child marriage. They’re also more likely to earn higher income, not only affecting their salaries and their personal exploitation, but it also affects the development of our society since education doesn’t only make you more qualified thus more likely to achieve better salaries, but it also helps develop our society because educated women would be more likely to make better decisions. Educated women are also more likely to participate in important decision making, such as participating in politics or taking a seat in government, thus making a more balanced and supposedly equal government.

Another effect of the increase in girl’s education is it’s benefit to the economy, as proven in countries such as Nepal and Bangladesh where there is a noticeable growth in their gross domestic product (GDP) because of their improvement in girls education.

Increase in female education also has many societal effects, such as the decrease of infant mortality rates as educated women are more likely to appreciate prenatal and neonatal care, it also has an indirect effect on infant survival rates, as women who are educated are more likely to earn more money, thus creating better living standards for the family. Additionally, increase in female education increases the overall cognitive[[1]](#footnote-0) development of women, helping women to better assess their lives and react accordingly whether by seeking more knowledge or other methods, thus making better decisions about their lives, benefiting not only themselves but their families and their society as a whole. Another noticeable benefit is the apparent decrease in domestic violence with educated women, where it has been noted that educated women are better able to deal with violent partners or family members.

***Key terms:***

* Student Enrollment: Enrollment is the process of arranging to attend an institution, in this case a school. It could also refer to the amount of students attending school, such as the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER).
* Gender gap: A gender gap is a relative disparity between different genders, which can be present in different areas and sectors of life, such as education.
* Literacy/illiteracy: Literacy is the ability to efficiently read and write in at least one language. Illiteracy is not having the ability to do so.
* Gender roles: Gender roles are the societal expectations of the way we act, dress, speak, groom, live our lives, etc… that are based upon our assigned gender. It basically determines how we’re supposed to behave according to our gender.
* Cultural norms: Cultural norms are the standards that we live by according to our cultures' shared beliefs, traditions and rules that guide our behavior within a certain cultural group.
* Public education: Public education is the system of education provided by a country’s government - funded by taxes - to its population. This includes not only public schools, but also kindergartens.

**Background information:**

**History of the topic:**

Women have faced injustice in education since ancient times, where only some girls were allowed to go to school. In ancient China, where girls were only allowed to be educated in subjects of social roles and “correct” behavior, crafting girls to become good family assets and wives rather than preparing them to become better, more knowledgeable individuals.

Moving on to medieval times, women were deemed to be unfit to seek education, because of them having the ability to bear children. Progress started in the 17th century, where a woman - Juliana Morell, a nun from Spain - received a college education, being the first girl to enroll in and finish college education. The issue with medieval times is that even though more and more universities were being made it was rare that any of them would accept women, including the ones made by women, such as Jeanne Navvare who founded a college in Paris. Women’s education started to broaden more during the time of the renaissance, where women were allowed to study other things such as mathematics and poetry.

Women finally got the chance to go to universities during the 18th and 19th century, even founding their own such as in 1873 where Emily Davies and Barbara Modichon founded Girton College at Cambridge. Another example of a country that pushed for women’s education is India, which is a developing country that pushed for the education of females, where literacy rates went from 22% to 65% for females.

In the 20th century, there were some improvements regarding the inclusion of women in educational institutions, especially in universities where more and more women - especially minorities - have been able to join top tier institutions such as the case of Jane Matilda Bolin, who in 1932 was the first African American woman to join Yale Law School who later on became the first African American woman to become a judge in 1939 .

Moving on to the 21st century, over 120 million people are still not going to schools, and some countries have an incredibly high illiteracy rate for women, such as South Sudan, where only 8% of women are literate. Although the state of women’s education has definitely improved over the years, with more and more governments taking care of the issue - such as Egypt which built multiple schools in rural areas to help shorten the distance between girls and schools, an important factor in the probability of girls going to school- , most of the developing countries still have a major problem in developing female education.

**Progress done to improve the status of female education:**

One of the most effective actions that have been taken to help girls go to school is activism, which has been able to not only spark a conversation about the necessity of educating girls, but it has also directly changed the state of female education.

One of the most notable and effective activists to help support girls' education is Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani woman who protested against the Taliban[[2]](#footnote-1) to return girls to schools after being banned from them in 2008. Malala would publicly speak against the Taliban's sexist rules, declaring on national television in Pakistan the needs and importance of equal access to education. Furthemore, she was shot by the Taliban in 2012 following her winning of the Pakistan's National Youth Peace Prize in 2011. After returning to school in Birmingham in 2013, Malala received international recognition for her activism, resulting in her winning multiple prizes throughout the years, including the Nobel Peace Prize. Malala later on founded the Malala Fund, an organization whose goal is to support girls education all around the world, having achieved change in countries like Pakistan, where they have been able to increase the enrollment of girls and establish education programs. Another country where the Malala fund was able to achieve change is in Sierra Leone, where the organization was able to support the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee’s (BRAC) Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents (ELA) Program, which helps girls achieve a better life by educating them through mentorship, life skills, health education and microfinance by building education networks in villages.

***Major countries involved:***

* The Republic of South Sudan: South Sudan has experienced widespread political conflict since it’s creation, which has halted any progress that can be made on education, not only creating a major issue for the education of children, but majorly affecting girls. With a female literacy rate of only 8%, only 73% of South Sudanese girls attend primary school, which translates to 7 girls for every 10 boys. This number drops even further for secondary school, where only 5 girls for every 10 boys attend school, being so severe that only 500 girls attended the last grade of secondary school in 2013.

One way that the country has tried to make progress is through the Girl’s Education South Sudan (GESS) organization which is overseen by the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI), which works to improve the status of girls education in South Sudan through financial support of girls, affording grants to schools, creating learning programs for adolescents without prior access to education and other factors.

* The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan: Having a similar case to South Sudan, Afghanistan has also been unable to improve the situation of girls education due to 30 years of sustained conflict. 3.7 million children don’t go to school, 60% of them being girls, which is relatively caused by tradition and social norms. Another reason is the long distances between girls and schools, which is made worse by a lack of transport which makes it extremely difficult for girls to go to school. Although the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) has worked with the previous government’s Ministry of Education to achieve progress by improving enrollment rates through more community based schools and local councils to improve the quality of education, the recent takeover by the Taliban has resulted in the banning of girls from secondary schools.
* The Arab Republic of Egypt: Being one of the developing countries that have made immense progress for girl’s education, Egypt has increased its literacy rate from 57% in 2006 to 68% in 2017. Egypt has been able to accomplish this through multiple government initiatives.

One of these initiatives is the Egypt Education Reform project, which aims to improve teaching and learning conditions in Egypt’s public education system. With help from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), they are planning to expand access to kindergarten education for 500 0000 children, training 500 000 teachers, provide 1.5 million students and teachers with digital learning resources and create a new student assessment and examination system which will be provided to over 2 million students.

* The Republic of India: India has one of the lowest female literacy rates in South East Asia, with a rate of 74%. 30 million children are out of school, 40% of which are girls. Girls' education in India is deemed less valuable than boys' education, due to gender roles and cultural norms, the same norms that lead to a third of girls to marry in their teenage years, leaving their education to take care of their families.

The Indian government has been able to achieve some progress through multiple initiatives, such as the 2009 Right To Education (RTE) act, which guarantees free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14, which has led to an 19% increase in enrollment from 2009 to 2016.

* The Republic of Niger: Despite recent investments in the education system, Niger continues to face very low education levels, caused by a low social demand for girls education because of the local gender based perceptions of girls roles in families, low education provisions and the issue of dominant poverty. While 65% of girls are enrolled in primary school, only 15.6% continue to enroll in secondary school, which is heavily due to the spread of child marriages and teenage pregnancies which make it impossible for girls to attend school.

The Nigerien government has worked with multiple organizations, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to improve the country’s state of education and increase the access of education to more girls. They have been able to do this through programs and initiatives such as the Sector Programme for Education and Training, which covers all education levels and sets a strategy for the government to enhance girls' education. This program has increased the gross enrolment rate (GRE) of girls primary education from 24% in 2000 to 65% in 2014.

* The Islamic Republic of Pakistan: 22.5 million children in Pakistan are out of school, of which the majority are girls. 32% of primary school aged girls are out of school, which results in the even worse statistic that says that only 19% of girls reach grade 9. This is due to multiple factors, such as gendered social norms, teenage pregnancies, Taliban restrictions on girls education and other factors like families' low economic status. The country’s education system doesn’t provide proper provisions, not providing basic things such as a safe route to schools, proper infrastructure which means many schools only have primary education which creates a bigger distance for girls to travel so that they can attend secondary school, lack of transport and proper financial support to educational institutions. Although the government is willing to help advance the situation, proven by its commitment to guarantee free education to all children from the ages of 5 to 16, the education system is still heavily underfunded, which results in failing infrastructure and unqualified teachers. One of the biggest effort makers that helps the situation is the Malala Fund, which was founded by native Malala Yousafzai who fought for girls education. The Malala fund works with the government to improve spending on education, which results in better infrastructure and higher quality education which reaches even more girls because of the introduction of digital curricula.

**Organizations involved:**

Malala fund:

Malala Fund is a nonprofit international organization. It was founded by Malala and Ziauddin Yousufzai in 2013. This organization does not only fight by funding, but they send advocates and activists who challenge policies and practices that prevent girls from going to schools. This organization funded multiple projects, and affected many countries. Like in Sierra Leone the organization helped support Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescent (ELA) Program.

Camfed:

Camfed, short for “campaign for female education” aims to reduce global poverty which includes education for girls. The organization was founded by Ann Cotton in 1993. This organization focuses on rural regions of sub-Saharan Africa and provides support to individuals in need. They created projects that have already supported more than 4.8 million disadvantaged students in 6,787 schools across 163 districts in Ghana, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Camfed also partners with government ministries and other non-profit organizations to create resources and awareness like the foreign, commonwealth and development office and Skoll foundation. They hope to create systematic change by molding girls into strong female leaders.

Women one organization:

Women One organization, whose goal is to improve girls' access to high quality education. They achieve this by partnering with institutions and organizations to provide women who face extreme poverty, cultural barriers and emergencies access to education. They achieve this through conducting research that allows them to highlight marginalized and overlooked populations of women who don’t have access to education, by advocating for girls education worldwide through international public campaigns and through creating and implementing sustainable education programmes for girls and women worldwide.

World Bank:

World Bank, who supports girls education by working with governments, organizations, the private sector, donors, and other entities to advance multi-sectoral approaches to overcome these challenges, which include offering funds and scholarships, building safe and inclusive learning for girls and young women and hiring/training qualified female teachers. Through their effort, the World Bank has been able to achieve change in multiple countries, such as in Pakistan and Bangladesh where they have afforded stipends to improve primary and secondary education. They have also created schemes to improve girls participation in higher education through the Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence (ACE) project, helping increase its number of students from 343 in 2014 to 3400 in 2020.

***UN involvement:***

The United Nations has 17 development goals in general and 6 major goals, girl’s education involves two goals which are “Goal 4: Education; Goal 5: Gender equality and women's empowerment.”. The UN is working tremendously in order to achieve these goals, through funding various projects as well as schools and creating many conferences in order to attain equality for women in the education sector worldwide.The “Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action” was a resolution adopted by the UN at the end of the fourth world conference on women on 15 September, 1995 in Beijing, China. This resolution targeted equality between men and women -which involves girls’ education- it is adopted by 189 countries and it set strategic objectives and actions for the advancement of women, it has 12 critical areas of concern, one of them is “education and training of women.” That targets girl’s education. Every five years they hold a series of five-year reviews on the resolution. The last one was held in March 2020. Their actions were that every country set goals for better education, and until the next conference these countries are **obligated** to work on the goals that they have set.

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women" also known as UN Women, which acts to promote equality in education, they revise school curricula and policies, and equal access to vocational education and training as well as information technologies. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was born on 16 November 1945. The Organization is the only United Nations agency with a mandate to cover all aspects of education. They focus on education as the main aspect, but also focus on empowering women and girls. They achieve this goal through the UNESCO strategy for gender equality in and through education. This strategy focuses on a transformation to benefit all learners and targeted interventions to support women’s and girls’ empowerment. This strategy highlights three lines of action; Better data to inform action. Better legal, policy and planning frameworks to advance rights. Better teaching and learning practices to empower. UNESCO partners up with other organizations to widen girls’ access to education and learning opportunities. For example their partnership with CJ, a Korean organization. This project helped raise awareness on girls/ education, the partnership also helped mobilise funds to support UNESCO projects on girls’ education, as CJ contributed funds to UNESCO malala fund foundation.

Also other organizations by the UN is the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) was founded in Dakar, Senegal, 17 years ago. The project was created by then-UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to promote educational opportunities for girls and gender equality across the world. One of the UNGEI’s achievements is the organization of the “Engendering Empowerment: Education and Equality” convention, which was help in 2010 in Dakar, Senegal where multiple representatives from different countries and organizations met up to discuss a framework for the improvement of access to quality education for girls.

Girl Up’s ‘for girls, by girls’ is a United Nations foundation, it encourages American girls to raise awareness and funds for their counterparts in the developing world. They believe it’s everyone’s duty to give back from what they were given and support other girls in receiving their education. “The case for girls is so compelling. If you can give a girl the smallest chance, she can make the biggest change,” said Her Majesty Queen Rania of Jordan, a Girl Up Global Advocate.

***Possible solutions:***

* Better education governance.
* Raise campaigns to show the benefits of education to uneducated families.
* Including female teachers to empower female students.
* Create a gender sensitive educational system.
* Provide incentives to families to encourage them to send their daughters to school.

***Guiding questions:***

* What can local governments do to increase the rate of gross enrollment rate?
* What are the social, political and economical consequences of women's education on society ?
* How can we encourage girl’s education?
* What are the societal aspects that deny girls their education?
* What actions did your country take to develop girls’ education?
* Does your country provide financial help for girl students?
* What is the educational system in your country?

***Useful links:***

* Article describing the education’s situation in Niger: <https://www.unicef.org/niger/education>
* Article providing solutions to help solve girls’ education: <https://www.worldvision.ca/stories/education/girls-education-facts-and-how-to-help>
* Article giving important facts about girls’ education in developing countries: <https://borgenproject.org/10-key-aspects-of-girls-education-in-developing-nations/>
* Article explaining Malala’s journey of activism towards girls’ education: <https://www.biography.com/activist/malala-yousafzai>
* Document provided by the DFID the benefits of girls’ education and the reason they are deprived of it: <https://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/development/docs/girlseducation.pdf>
* Global advantages of girls’ education: <https://www.borgenmagazine.com/global-advantages-of-female-education/>

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1. Relating to the action of processing and acquiring knowledge [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. A political and military organization that took over her village of Swat Valley in 2007 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)