



## GIRLS' EDUCATION



Ethiopia is one of the countries selected for UNICEF's '25 by 2005' campaign, a major initiative to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education in 25 priority countries by the year 2005.

Countries were chosen that had one or more of the following: low enrolment rates for girls; gender gaps of more than 10% in primary education enrolment; more than one million girls out of school; inclusion in the Education For All Fast Track initiative; and those hard hit by crises affecting school opportunities for girls, such as HIV/AIDS and conflict.

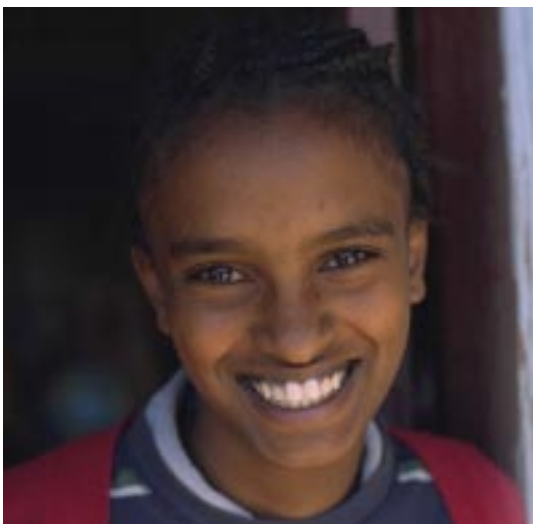
In each country, UNICEF is working with governments to mobilise new resources, build

broad national consensus on the need to get and keep girls in school and help improve schools themselves to make them more welcoming to girls. Ethiopia has made tremendous strides in increasing school enrolment rates from 30 percent in 1996 to 51 percent today. However, there is still a 20-percentage point gap that separates the enrolment rate of boys and girls nationally.

We must continue to work together to increase public demand for girls' education. We must build on strategic partnerships, including women's associations, NGOs and community organisations. And we must involve all sectors, including health, water and HIV/AIDS prevention, because the educated girls of today will be Ethiopia's mothers and citizens of tomorrow.

David S. Bassiouni  
Representative

## GIRLS HEAD FOR THE TOP OF THE CLASS IN ETHIOPIA



Fourteen-year-old Wengelawit talks with the confidence of someone who has made it to the top. Last year, she ranked number two at Arbegnoch Primary School in her seventh grade class of 70 children - "ahead of all the boys," she notes proudly. This year she's aiming to be number one. After that, she says she wants to go to secondary school and university and eventually become a pilot for Ethiopian Airlines.

Just three years ago, this dream didn't seem possible. Like many girls in fifth grade, Wengelawit was finding school more and more difficult. She was also expected to do more chores at home like cooking, cleaning and fetching water. Her confidence was failing, and she was too shy to ask help from her teachers.

Wengelawit then enrolled in the Tutorial Programme for Girls, a project helping 16,000 girls in grades 5 through 8 overcome obstacles to learning. Every Saturday, she and 240 other girls attend six 40-minute sessions covering essentials such as English, math and science. The 60 or so girls in each session are encouraged to ask questions and get individual help from teachers.

The programme has made a world of difference to Wengelawit. "Before I wasn't answering the teacher in class, and I didn't ask questions when I didn't understand," she says. "Now I understand what I didn't know before."

The programme is run in 170 schools by the Addis Ababa Education Bureau and supported by UNICEF, which provides supplies such as pens and notebooks and pays for teachers' training and



organise girls' clubs where members can learn about and discuss issues of concern to them, such as HIV/AIDS. In November 2002, the Education Bureau sponsored a leadership

Asemu Ayalew, an English teacher who tutors Wengelawit in the Saturday classes, is happy with the changes the tutorial programme is making in the girls' lives. Asemu says many boys as well as girls start working when they reach adolescence, but it is girls who are more likely to be kept home from school or drop out completely because of the large burden of household work they are expected to take on.

transportation. The teachers volunteer their time.

workshop for 200 girls from these clubs.

Other measures to improve girls' education include hiring more female teachers, who act as role models and academic counsellors for girls, and training teachers and administrators to become more sensitive to girls' needs in the classroom. Many schools also

"We teach girls how to deal with people so they can be effective in life," says Hailemariam Tekle-wold, programme coordinator for the Bureau. "We show them that they can be whatever they want - mothers, department heads, teachers..."

She notes that girls who attend Saturday classes get better grades than other girls and are more likely to attend secondary school.

"The girls ... have more knowledge, and they feel more confident," she says. "They participate like boys."

## Interview with Tenagnework Anegagre, Third Grade Teacher

Tenagnework Anegagre is a third-grade teacher at the Shum Sheha Primary School in Bugna Woreda, near the town of Lalibela. Here she talks about education's role in the fight against early marriage.

*In the places where you have taught, have you come across the practice of early marriage?*

Children get married before they are even seven-years-old, at five years, even while they are still in their mothers' arms. What can we do to fight this? There is the church. On Sundays, we go before the people and teach that this is a harmful tradition. Those who accept what we teach will send their children to school. Those on whom the tradition weighs heavily, they don't accept us,

and they even remove the children that are going to school in order to marry them.

*What role can priests have to be effective?*

They can refuse to bury people. They can declare that people who engage in this practice will not be buried in their church, or that they won't receive the absolution service when they die. Otherwise people will continue the practice even in secret.

*Regarding early marriage, what do you teach?*

There was a boy in my former school. He told us that he was going to get married because of pressure from his family, but his real wish was to continue

with his schooling. We spoke to his parents and got them to cancel the plans.

When girls inform us that they are going to marry, they tell us that if they refuse, their families will refuse to provide them with supplies they need to go to school. Then, according to the resources available to the school, the girls receive pens, exercise books and so forth.

*There are girls who drop out for other reasons. What do you do to make things easier for them?* Girls tend to be shy. We call these girls separately for



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## Interview with Aline Bory Adams, UNICEF Chief of Education



### ***What is the focus of UNICEF's education programme here in Ethiopia?***

**Our focus is increasing participation in primary education and improving the quality of education. We focus particularly on the education of girls, because here in Ethiopia we have a wide gender gap. There is a 20-point difference between the enrolment of girls and that of boys. UNICEF has been assigned a leading role by the Secretary General of the UN to co-ordinate all action on girls' education.**

*Ethiopia is one of the countries selected for the "25 by 2005" programme. Can you tell us about this initiative?*

UNICEF has launched an initiative to accelerate progress on girls' education and has selected 25 countries based on certain criteria like the low enrolment of girls, a high gender gap and so forth but also countries where there is a system in place that promotes the participation of girls like Ethiopia.

*How are your relations with your counterparts?*

We work very closely with the Ministry of Education (MOE) both at the federal and regional levels. We also have a very important partnership with the

Norwegian Government, which has been one of the major donors for UNICEF's girls' education programme in Ethiopia.

*What are the challenges that you are facing?*

The first challenge, as far as education is concerned, is to ensure that all the children are schooled and by 2015 to be able to reach the goal of universal primary education. The other important challenge is to overcome all barriers that constrain the education of girls, because this is one of our key concerns whether we are talking about economic, political or cultural barriers.

*Do you think that you will be able to meet those goals?*

These goals are certainly priorities of the Government, but it will definitely require a

lot of effort, particularly as far as girls' education is concerned. It is actually important to realize that we can not reach these goals if we continue business as usual. The possibility is there, the potential is there, but definitely we require specific and more aggressive measures, particularly in regard to girls' education.

*Why did UNICEF include education as part of its emergency appeal?*

During a period of crisis, whether drought or conflict, there is an impact on the education system. Children drop out of school for economic reasons. Most likely children will not go back to school after the crisis is over. But education provides these children with a sense of normalcy even in a period of crisis so it is an essential component of UNICEF's emergency interventions.

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tutorials' in a group, and we get them to stand up and read among their friends. They are advised not to be afraid, not to fear making mistakes, and we help them to speak in front of their classmates.

For every child,  
Health, Education, Equality, Protection  
ADVANCE HUMANITY

## NEWS FILE



**22 December-17 January:** Over six hundred students from Addis Ababa high schools visited the HIV/AIDS Youth Art Exhibition at the Museum of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University. The exhibition, sponsored by the Ministry of Education, HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office and UNICEF, provided young artists with an opportunity to showcase their artworks depicting messages on HIV/AIDS prevention, ending discrimination and stigma and providing care and support for those living with or orphaned by the virus.

**31 January:** The second round of maternal neonatal tetanus elimination campaign targetting close to 1.9 million beneficiaries kicked off in East Shoa, North Shoa, East Wellega and West Wellega zones. Illubabor Zone with over 250,000 targetted beneficiaries continued on 17 February. The UNICEF-supported campaign is part of efforts with the Ministry of Health to reduce the number of deaths due to maternal neonatal tetanus in Ethiopia. Ethiopia ranks fourth in the world in the number of deaths due to vaccine-preventable neonatal tetanus.

**6 February:** UNICEF handed over a drilling rig and equipment to the Benishangul-Gumuz Regional Government capable of drilling up to 80 shallow wells annually to provide safe drinking water to local communities in the region. The rig and related equipment, worth an estimated five million birr, was made possible by a generous donation to UNICEF by the Norwegian Government as part of the Woreda Intergrated Basic Service (WIBS) programme. The project aims to reduce the morbidity and mortality of children and women through the support of primary health, nutrition, water and sanitation interventions.



**18 February:** The Ministry of Education (MOE) and UNICEF hosted a workshop to develop innovative strategies and an action plan to promote girls' education in Gambela, Benishangul, Oromia, the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) and Amhara, that are all regions with wide gender gaps and low girls' school enrolment rates. The workshop is part of the African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI) designed to reach out to school girls and help them overcome the barriers to obtaining quality basic education.



**25 February:** UNICEF sponsored a five-day training workshop run by therapeutic feeding experts Professor Michael Golden and nutritionist Dr. Yvonne Grellety for 55 health professionals to teach updated guidelines on the management of severe wasting and oedematous malnutrition to address the current humanitarian crisis.

**5 March:** The second meeting of the Ethiopian Teenager's Forum, supported by UNICEF, developed a ten-point plan to assist street children. First among these was that the Government should enact and enforce laws against drug trafficking and harmful traditional practices that pose dangers to youth. The



teenagers also called upon the Government to adopt policies that will enable people to get off the streets while addressing the root causes of poverty.



**16-23 March:** Tireza Satheesh, 17, and Zerihun Mammo, 16, represented Ethiopian young people at the Third World Water Forum (WWF3) in Kyoto, Japan. The teenagers presented a video on the drought and UNICEF's water and sanitation-related emergency interventions.