



EDUCATING GIRLS BENEFITS ALL!



UNICEF believes there is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls. But too often, Ethiopian girls do not have the access to education that each and every child has the right to. In fact, today only half of girls start primary school and very few are able to successfully complete their basic education.

None of the world's development goals can be reached without significant progress in girls' education. Around the globe, 9 million more girls than boys are left out of school every year. Educating girls is the single most effective tool for raising economic productivity, lowering infant and maternal mortality, improving nutrition and health, and reducing poverty, HIV/AIDS and other diseases. Girls denied an education are more vulnerable to hunger, violence, abuse, exploitation and trafficking and are more likely to die in childbirth.

Ethiopia has been selected as one of 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. UNICEF is working with the Government to mobilise

new resources, build broad national consensus on the need to get and keep girls in school and help improve the schools themselves to make them more welcoming to girls. Tremendous strides have been made in increasing girls' school enrolment rates from 30 percent in 1996 to 51 percent today. But it is not enough, and we still have a 20-percentage point gap that separates the enrolment rate of boys and girls nationally. In addition, in an emergency, such as we have seen recently in Ethiopia, many girls missed out on school because of displacement.

The positive impact of educating girls is dramatic: As mothers, educated women are more likely to have healthy children and more likely to ensure that their children complete school. They can also more fully contribute to the political, social and economic development of Ethiopia.

Educating girls benefits all. The most effective way to ensure a quality education for both boys and girls is a strategic focus on girls, who generally have to overcome higher barriers. Removing these barriers – distance from home, lack of sanitation facilities, the threat of violence – will help us achieve the goal of education for all of Ethiopia's children by 2015.

Bjorn Ljungqvist
Representative



ESTIMATED COST FOR 'GIRL-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS'

ACTIVITIES	ESTIMATED COST PER SCHOOL IN US DOLLARS
Tutorial classes (2 teachers x 4 subjects x 10 months x 2 shifts @ \$25)	\$4,000
Separate latrines for boys and girls (4 seats)	\$3,488

ACTIVITES	ESTIMATED COST PER SCHOOL IN US DOLLARS
Water supply (hand-dug well with hand pump)	\$5,220
Classroom equipment per school	\$400
. Blackboards - \$16.70 x 24 classes	
. Chairs for teachers - \$16.70 x 24 classes	\$400
. Tables for teachers - \$29 x 24 classes	\$696
. Cupboards - \$17 x 2 per school	\$34
. Combined desks - \$30 x 50 students x 24 classrooms	\$36,000
Sub-total cost	\$37,530
Incentives for achieving girls (2 classes from each grade x 8 (grades 1-8) x 3 students from each class x 2 shifts @ \$20)	\$1,920
School awards for best girls' participation and achievement (Radio \$38 and reproduction machine \$1,612)	\$1,650
Training for 20 teachers per school (2 days training package x 20 teachers @ \$37)	\$1,480
Establishment of girls' clubs	\$250
Establishment of guidance and counseling committees (Training package for 2 days x 2 annually x 7 members @ \$40)	\$1,120
Training of school management committees (Training package for 2 days x 2 annually x 7 members @ \$40)	\$1,120

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



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 transportation. The teachers volunteer their time.

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

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SAMIA SADIK: AN INSPIRATION FOR GIRLS' EDUCATION



Eighteen-year-old Samia Sadik travels 12 kilometres every day from her village in Harla to the Sabeen Secondary School in the eastern Ethiopia town of Dire Dawa.

"I am the first girl from Harla to reach the ninth grade," said Samia,

who has become a role model for the girls in her village. "I know that the other girls in the village are happy for me, because they are always encouraging me to keep fighting to reach my goals in life. They tell me that I have been an example for them, and this also makes me happy, because things need to change for girls so that they can have a better life, and going to school is very important for this."

Samia has waged a long and painful battle against ancient traditions in her effort to go to school. "My troubles began when I was fourteen-years-old," said Samia. "I was in the fourth grade when a man that I had never met before approached my parents and asked for my hand in

marriage."

Samia was not prepared to give in to tradition. "I ran away from him, but my family found me in the bushes and returned me to his house. ... I ran away from him a total of four times finally ending up at school where I asked my teachers to help me."

Wolde Giro is the principal of Harla Elementary School and was one of the teachers who helped Samia get through her ordeal. "Samia is a gifted student," said Wolde. "She has a great aptitude for learning, gets very good results, and she enjoys school. In the middle of her studies her family made arrangements for her to marry, but Samia never accepted their decision and ran away from

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sensitive to girls' needs in the classroom. Many schools also 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 workshop for 200 girls from these clubs.

"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..."

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.

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."



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(Samia cont'd from page 3)

her intended husband several times. We informed the Women's Affairs Office (WAO) in Dire Dawa about her situation, and they called a meeting with the local farmers' association. The entire community was informed of her legal rights, including her right to go to school. After that meeting her parents returned the money that they had received from the husband, thereby cancelling the marriage agreement and leaving her free to go to school."

Samia and girls like her across Ethiopia are at the forefront of the struggle to provide all girls with an education.

"We have to ensure that all children are schooled so that by 2015 we will be able to reach the goal of universal primary education," said Aline Bory-Adams, UNICEF's Chief of Education. "The other important challenge is to overcome all barriers that constrain the education of girls, whether we are talking about economic, political or cultural barriers, including the practice of early marriage." It is estimated that close to 60 per cent of Ethiopian girls marry before they reach 18.

"We did not think that Samia would get this far," said her mother Zahara Aliye. "When she was much younger I used to believe a girl had no use for an education, and I did not want her to waste her time preferring that she get married, settle down and have children. Now I believe that girls should marry of their own free will when they decide."

Imru Taba is the principal of Jelo Belino School where Samia completed the eighth

grade. He is quick to affirm that the community does not view male and female students equally. "We hold regular seminars and workshops where we teach about the benefits of educating girls," said Imru. "We have designated a women's affairs focal point. Our female teachers play an active role in these workshops and meetings and present themselves as examples of what an education can mean for a girl. Parents see that their daughters too can become teachers or doctors, or any other type of professional provided they get an education."

These changes are taking place all across Dire Dawa Administrative Council, including in Harla where Samia began her education. "We bring together the elders and the Sheikhs and tell them about the advantages of getting an education," said Wolde. "In this regard, the Sheikhs have been very helpful. Our work with the WAO, where we recognise the achievements of our top performers, is also bringing about changes. Every year we are seeing the number of enrolled girls increase."