



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
OF AZERBAIJAN REPUBLIC**



REACHING THE LAST FEW: GIRLS' EDUCATION IN AZERBAIJAN

"What you put in the pot, you get out" (old Azeri proverb)

Now it is time to see what is being put into the pot for girls, and as a result, what kind of contributions women will be able to make to Azerbaijan of the 21st century.

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Reaching the Last Few: Girls' Education in Azerbaijan

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Acknowledgments

This study has been undertaken to examine the causes of girls' drop-out in Azerbaijan and to make recommendations for the joint Ministry of Education and UNICEF Project Plan of Action. The study included a workshop for the Ministry of Education officials, senior educators, NGOs on the use of Participatory Learning and Action for girls' education activities.

Many organizations and individuals provided information and assistance in the collection of material for this report, including officials of the Ministry of Education and the State Statistics Committee, the Department of Science, Culture and Education; the State Committee on Women's Issues, UNIFEM, the World Bank, NGO representatives, and schools directors, teachers and children.

Summary and Recommendations

1. The major problems associated with both boys' and girls' basic education in Azerbaijan appear to relate to quality rather than to access, although, as many other analysts have noted, the lack of reliable census and survey statistics between the period 1989-1999, which corresponded to a rapid and unprecedented set of changes, makes it difficult to establish a pattern and position from which to assess and plan.

In particular, the restricted range of official published gender-disaggregated data makes analysis of the current situation of girls, and projection of trends very problematic¹. The recommendations in this report reflect the need for better information in order to target and help girls who are out of school, to improve quality for those who are in school, and to extend girls/women's participation in a wider range of disciplines and occupations.

According to a UNDP report, the collection and use of gender statistics is now being incorporated into all State structures (1999:29) and various studies are being proposed by the government. Fortunately, statistics on women's educational choices at secondary and higher levels are currently available, and the small range of occupations in which women are well-represented tell us something about the kinds of role models, educational choices and careers that the current generation of primary school girls are seeing.

As information becomes available and more international reporting categories are incorporated it will be easier to assess and monitor girls' access, participation and achievement. Appendix 1 presents a list of standard indicators that are useful for gender analysis in education. The State Statistics Committee currently collects some of these and others might be included, as resources become available. As the forthcoming national assessments within a sample of schools at basic education level are introduced, the results of these, too, should be disaggregated by gender, in order to examine girls' achievement.

Finally, understanding the meaning and context of statistical information is critical: statistics should always be supplemented by scholarly studies, using both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Recommendation #1a: Trends in girls' educational access, participation and achievement should be carefully monitored through collection and publication of statistics that meet international conventions and the needs of educational analysts. However, limited government resources make it unlikely that this recommendation, and the data resulting from it, will be available in the near future. In the meantime, some useful sample data, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods can be obtained using the approaches mentioned in Recommendations # 1b and #2.

¹ The most comprehensive published gender disaggregated figures appear in the *Education for All Assessment* (Government of Azerbaijan, 1999). For consistency, these figures are used, except when otherwise noted

Recommendation #1b: UNICEF’s institutional partners in educational programme management should be encouraged to undertake qualitative and quantitative research on access and participation by gender, and to encourage such research among students pursuing higher degrees. As the new national assessment examinations take place, they should be encouraged to undertake research on achievement by gender. Such partners might include research institutions and university departments that focus on education, gender, science and culture, including newly established bodies such as the State Institute for Education Issues and Problems, the Gender Scientific and Education Center at Baku State University and gender programs at other universities.

2. Even though eleven years of compulsory primary and secondary education are free, at least 7-8% of children, and probably more, according to varying figures—are out of school². Wastage is described by some Ministry officials as minimal; by others it is described as almost non-existent in the 1970s and 1980s, but as “a lot” now. A School Wastage Study of 2000 presents a thorough examination of the possibilities in relation to wastage.

It is likely that many if not most of those who are not in school—poorer urban children; rural and isolated children; refugees and internally displaced children; and street/working children, are out of school because of financial hardship/opportunity costs of schooling, and that their numbers are going to increase, at least in the near future. Given the continuing harsh economic conditions of the 1990’s, girls in these categories will probably be more vulnerable than boys as parents are forced to make decisions about how to use their scarce resources, and as girls’ labor in domestic activities and household production become more valuable to some hard-pressed families. Some rural girls are also affected by cultural attitudes about early marriage and the need to protect girls’ morality, and according to Ministry officials, a small percentage of such girls are continuing to secondary level.

In addressing these issues, it is important to bear three points in mind: 1) the lack of adequate data on the educational situation and what people need; the lack of government funding for social services; and 3) the fact that many families lack the means to help themselves. However, there are many ways in which existing resources can be targeted more effectively to meet local needs, and there are many steps communities can take to help themselves. Participatory Learning and Action is an approach that can produce timely and cost-effective identification of vulnerable categories of children/parents/communities, pinpoint their needs more effectively, and create effective action to help. Trained teams work with local communities and groups to identify issues in girls’ education, assess options, develop local action plans, and organize for action. Participatory Research and Action

² An examination of various figures suggests that if these figures err, they err in the direction of overestimating the number of children in school. To take one example: varying figures are offered for the number of refugees and internally displaced persons in Azerbaijan (official figures are found in the *Population of Azerbaijan, 2001*: 30 (State Statistics Committee) but in interviews with Ministry of Education officials, whose comments reflect earlier figures published in figures in *The Statistical Information About Refugees and Internally Displaced People, 2000* (State Statistics Committee, 2000), 90,000 pupils in Grades 1-11 (ages 7-17) are refugees and IDPs (as well as 40,000 students in higher levels of education). Since the total number of refugees/IDPs is estimated at close to one million (and higher, by some sources), this is a disproportionately small number of children in this age category, indicating that others might be out of school.

has been used successfully by UNICEF in other countries, and has helped to improve policy and projects in many countries, both east and west.

Recommendation #2. The Ministry of Education has declared the year 2001 as the Year of Quality in Education, and while many areas for improvement have been targeted by various organizations, it is important to draw upon the resources and insights of *all* the stakeholders in this situation. As part of its active learning, child-centered and rights-based approach to education, and bearing in mind its emphasis on drawing upon the opinions of stakeholders as part of its management process, a team of at least twelve people in Participatory Learning and Action approaches should be trained in order to work with communities, parents, teachers and children to assess needs and options, and to help communities to participate in the educational reform process.³ Such communities might be chosen from the existing pilot school communities⁴, and the results used to strengthen the joint programmes. The outcomes of such an approach will be:

- a series of practical community action plans,
- aggregated data suitable for planning at regional or national level,
- improved baselines for future research,
- capacity-building at local level, since communities can use it on new problems and issues as they arise. Participatory Learning and Action, by its very nature, is intersectoral, so it should be useful to a range of Ministry of Education and other Ministry/Government objectives.

Appendix 2 contains appropriate terms of reference for potential trainers of these teams.

3. During the transition period of the last decade, women have become increasingly excluded from the labour market (UNDP:10), owing to a variety of factors such as pressure of domestic work, combined with unfavorable unofficial workplace conditions such as a smaller range of occupational opportunities, lower average wages as compared with those of men, fewer chances for high-level positions, etc. Women have consistently formed about 60% of the officially unemployed, and if those who have not been paid or those on unpaid leave are counted, the proportion of women out of work is probably much higher, since it is usually the most vulnerable workers who are found in these “invisible” categories.

³ Local communities in many countries have successfully participated, in many ways, in the improvement of their schools. *Improving Community Participation in Education* (Wolf and Kane, 1997) and *From Information to Action: Tools for Improving Community Participation in Education* (Kane, 2000) are computer tools that document this, and the processes involved.

⁴ Members of the Hirdalan IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) settlement have already developed some basic action plans and what appear to be effective methods of monitoring progress in implementing them. At least one member of this community might be part of the proposed team.

There are clear gender differences in occupations and choices of field of study at secondary vocational, technical and third-level education, and there are almost no girls taking technical training. Women predominate in fields such as health, education and personal services; and are very poorly represented in almost all other areas. Women are also poorly represented in management by a factor of six to one (UNDP 1999). Other indicators of poor female representation include the small number of women academicians and senior university staff, and the decline of women parliamentarians from 40% in 1985 to 12 % in 2000. (State Statistics Committee, 2000, *Women and Men in Azerbaijan*: 108) A basic analysis of national newspaper advertisements from a range of newspapers over a two-week period during this study shows that 20% specify the gender of the applicant, and may also, in the case of females, specify appearance (“good-looking”) and character (“well-behaved”) which are not found in advertisements that seek male applicants.

Recommendation #3: the Government/UNICEF should develop a comprehensive national project to improve girls’ awareness of and confidence in their ability to participate in a wider range of careers, and to work with employers and schools to address stereotypes about suitable occupations for women. Once again, this might be pioneered in the pilot project communities. Another vehicle might be the Girls’ Clubs to be established under Government Resolution #33, in conjunction with the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Tourism, the Ministry of Education, the Gender in Development (GID) Unit’s gender awareness program, the Department for Social Issues, Baku University’s gender studies program, the State Committee on Women’s and the 40+ women’s NGOs in Azerbaijan.

UNICEF’s film, *Meena*, which has been adapted for use in many countries, or a similar product (film, brochure, curriculum components) developed for Azerbaijan’s various regions, could be used as part of this project, in a sensitization program in schools and with youth groups.

4. In recent years, various observers have expressed concern about the quality of textbooks in Azerbaijan, including UNICEF and the World Bank. Efforts have been made, with varying success, to create textbooks that are more relevant to Azeri culture, and that reflect modern pedagogical approaches. This has led to a series of newly designed textbooks. Little attention seems to have been paid in the texts to gender bias, which can have a serious effect on educational quality. During the short period of this consultancy, only one textbook, a Grade 2 Reader, could be analyzed in detail, but as this report shows, it depicts males three times as often as females, and while it presents a wide range of occupations and activities for males, there are very few for females. International research shows that when girls perform poorly in school, one contributing factor may be textbooks, which are irrelevant to girls’ experiences. Table 2, page 19 shows the results of the analysis in detail.

Recommendation #4. A comprehensive analysis of textbooks should be undertaken, using standard conventions of gender analysis (see Appendix 3 for sample questions). If patterns of bias are identified, teachers should be shown how to compensate for this until new textbooks are introduced.

5. In the 1990's, international organizations dealing with issues of girls' education devoted a lot of effort to developing strategies to improve girls' participation in education. Some of these are listed in Appendix 4. Too often, countries adopted strategies as a result of faddish pressures by such international organizations, without considering whether they were the best for their circumstances and context. Research (Kane, 1998) shows that very few strategies have been proven to work in all situations and cultural contexts. It is critical, therefore, when resources are scarce, to have enough data about vulnerable groups and their needs to target groups for action and carefully tailor strategies to their needs.

Recommendation #5: Using an approach such as Participatory Learning and Action, make the best use of limited resources by identifying groups at risk and assessing their needs and possible options for addressing such needs before deploying strategies that have worked elsewhere but may not be the most effective for various communities in Azerbaijan.

I. Introduction and Background

Azerbaijan is noted for its ancient heritage of education and emphasis on intellectual excellence. Specialized institutions of learning existed long before such establishments were created in many other countries. Women had a role in this tradition as poets, writers and teachers.

In more recent years, and particularly in the last decade, the nation has seen political and economic changes that are unparalleled in recent times. The consequences of rapid transitional adaptations from the Soviet period, sharply increased poverty, a dramatic gap between the small number who are very well-off and the generally poor population, and an armed conflict with Armenia leading to the assimilation of over one million refugees, can be seen everywhere. One sentence captures the predicament: “Nowhere in the world was there a body of practical experience that could help rationalize the process” of moving from a centrally planned economy to a market economy, from modest living standards to harsh poverty, of an influx of over one million refugees. *Children and Women in Azerbaijan: A Situation Analysis* (UNICEF and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 1999: 11)

Thus, when we reflect upon the combination of the Azerbaijani people’s classical emphasis on education, on the one hand, and the traumatic journey its people now face, particularly in relation to the economy, on the other, we might say that it is a “model without models”—its current problems lie not with cultural attitudes toward education or lack of a historical foundation for educational excellence, but rather in the need to maintain and enhance this tradition as they move into new, uncharted territory in which lack of financial resources will be the major characteristic.

However, this journey is not entirely without markers: this report looks at some signs and trends which are emerging, and which will be crucial to monitor in the next decade if women and girls are to function as partners with men and boys in the journey. Some of these markers can be found in the educational system, and some can be identified by looking at demographic and cultural changes affecting adult women.

One general observation is worth noting: in recent decades, dramatically rapid alterations in a nation, whether it is revolution, major economic change, or post-colonial independence, have often led to a worsening in the conditions for women, for at least two reasons: women are often seen as the cultural “stabilizers” in periods of rapid change, and are expected to preserve traditional cultural values as the male citizens move into new activities; and in periods of economic decline, political emphasis is usually placed on seeing that scarce job opportunities go to males, first. In fact, women form the majority of the “new poor” in Azerbaijan—youth, unemployed people, refugees and IDPs, unpaid employees and employees on indefinite leave. (UNDP:33) These factors, in turn, will have consequences for girls’ education, and particularly on parents’ decisions about the kinds of education their girls get, and the extent of that education. Some of the research conducted for this report supports this observation.

The report is part of the Education for All assessment process, which recommended a series of studies, including one on girls' education. The terms of reference were developed by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education. The report was prepared by an international consultant, Eileen Kane, who worked with ministry officials, UNICEF staff and a variety of other stakeholders.

The information in the study is based on data and reports prepared for and by the Ministry of Education, the State Statistics Committee, the State Committee on Women; the Department of Science, Education and Culture, and from a variety of reports and studies produced by and for the Ministry of Education; interviews with officials and informants in ministry offices, non-governmental organizations, an internally displaced persons (IDP) camp, and schools; classroom observation; sample textbook analysis, and analysis of cultural materials.

II. Education and Girls' Education

A. Education and Statistics

Along with many other sources and commentators, the Government of Azerbaijan-UNICEF's Country *Programme of Cooperation, Master Plan of Operations, 2000-2004*, and School Wastage, in the Azerbaijani educational system study, (2000), have pointed to a fundamental problem in examining the educational system in Azerbaijan: the limited range of educational statistics.

The major features of this problem have been outlined in the *Master Plan of Operations 2000-2004* (p. 154). Not only do the figures not cover some of the variables necessary for analysis of wastage, but also it appears that reporting may be biased because of possible links between school attendance and school budget allocations, and the fact that parents and guardians may be reluctant to report lack of attendance and dropouts. In addition, it can be difficult to see trends, since no census of population was taken between 1989 and 1999, a period which corresponded to some of the most marked changes in recent history, leading to increasingly unreliable estimates.⁵

While this may be remedied in the next few years (it is said that gender statistics will be incorporated into the work of every State Department [UNDP:29]; the Ministry of Education reports that a new State Institution on Education Issues and Problems has been established; and a UNESCO study on children from Grades 5-11 is proposed), the current range of statistical information only permits approximations, and must be supplemented, as is the case with all statistics, by data from other approaches such as household surveys, specialized reports, academic studies, and even anthropological case studies. Because of the lack of such studies during the Soviet period, and constraints arising from the current financial situation, these, too, are limited. Sometimes, the source

⁵ For example, the figures presented in the *Statistical Yearbook of Azerbaijan, 2000* page 121 and those in *Education 2001*, page 73 for the years 1996-2000 differ in every respect for each category of this table except one, sometimes by as little as 1000, sometimes as much as 69,000.

According to census officials, figures from previous years were retrospectively recalculated using the results of the 1999 census.

of figures and conclusions is not clear: in one otherwise excellent publication, for example, results from a “special survey” are frequently cited, yet no citation, or details of size, sampling, or questions is provided.

Finally, analysis of *girls’* and *boys’* participation in education is seriously hindered by lack of gender-disaggregated statistical information at the national and regional level. Although some data were disaggregated in the past, they have not been included in the census reports. However, useful disaggregated information on secondary vocational schools and higher education institutions is published, as well as other official census disaggregated data on areas outside the educational sector, such as occupational data, which allows us to examine the choices older girls are making, and the kinds of role models they are seeing.

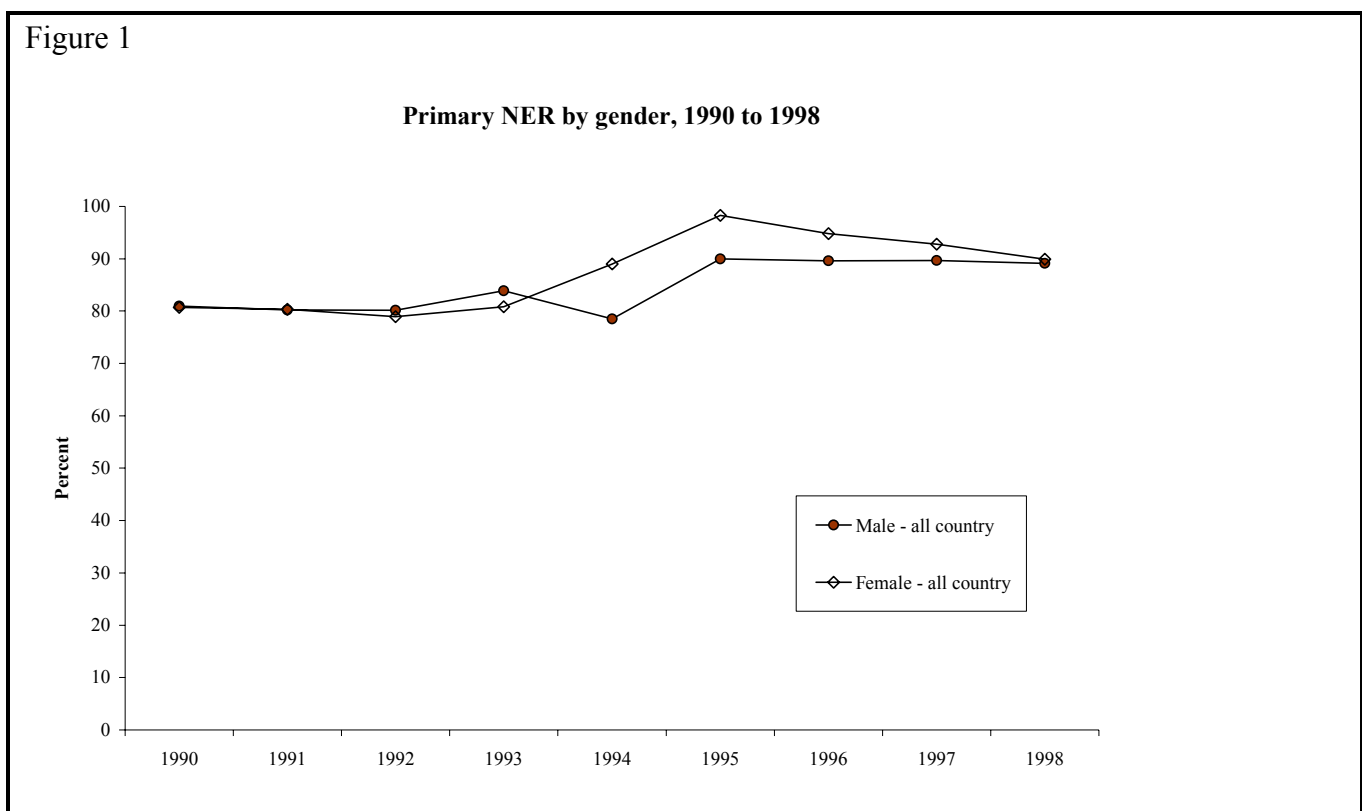
B. Education in Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan provides eleven years of free compulsory education for all its children at three levels: primary (grades 1-4, ages 6-9), main or basic (grades 5-9, ages 10-14) and general secondary (grades 10-11, ages 15-16). Students may also attend technical secondary (ages 15-18) or vocational secondary (ages 15-17). However, parents incur expenses in the form of uniforms, shoes, paper and pencils, etc., and after Grade 4, textbooks; and students whose examination points are insufficient to gain entry into secondary vocation, technical and tertiary levels must pay yearly fees. It is clear from talking to parents that many also make extra payments to teachers and schools for classroom extras, trips, additional attentions to their children, etc., and that at least some teachers have come to expect this as a way of supplementing their low salaries. Since average income and purchasing power have declined markedly in the last ten years, parents, the majority of whom are living below the poverty level (50-85% of the population, depending on the region), face hard choices about spending.

The educational system in Azerbaijan has been severely affected by the events in recent history. Investment in education accounted for 3.8% of GDP expenditure in 2001; it has been estimated that 1996 education spending levels had fallen to one-fifth of 1990 levels, adjusting for the decline in GDP (UNICEF-The Republic of Azerbaijan, 1999).

This decline is reflected throughout the education system, from investment in school construction (according to Ministry officials, no new schools have been built in the last ten years, while 616 have been lost as a result of the conflict in Nagorny-Karabakh); school maintenance, teachers’ salaries, lack of educational supplies, textbook quality and production, and a range of other education-related expenditures. It is estimated that fewer than 2 percent of children drop out in grades 1, 2, and 3. Repetition rates are less than 1 percent in grades 1-4, and effective primary net enrollment rates (NER) are 92.4% for boys and 92.8% for girls.

However, as Figure 1 shows, there has been a decline in NER in the late 1990s, and this has been attributed to the fall in the number of girls, from 98% in 1995 to 90% in 1998. (Figures for boys have remained steady at 90%). Girls’ decline is greater in rural than in urban areas.



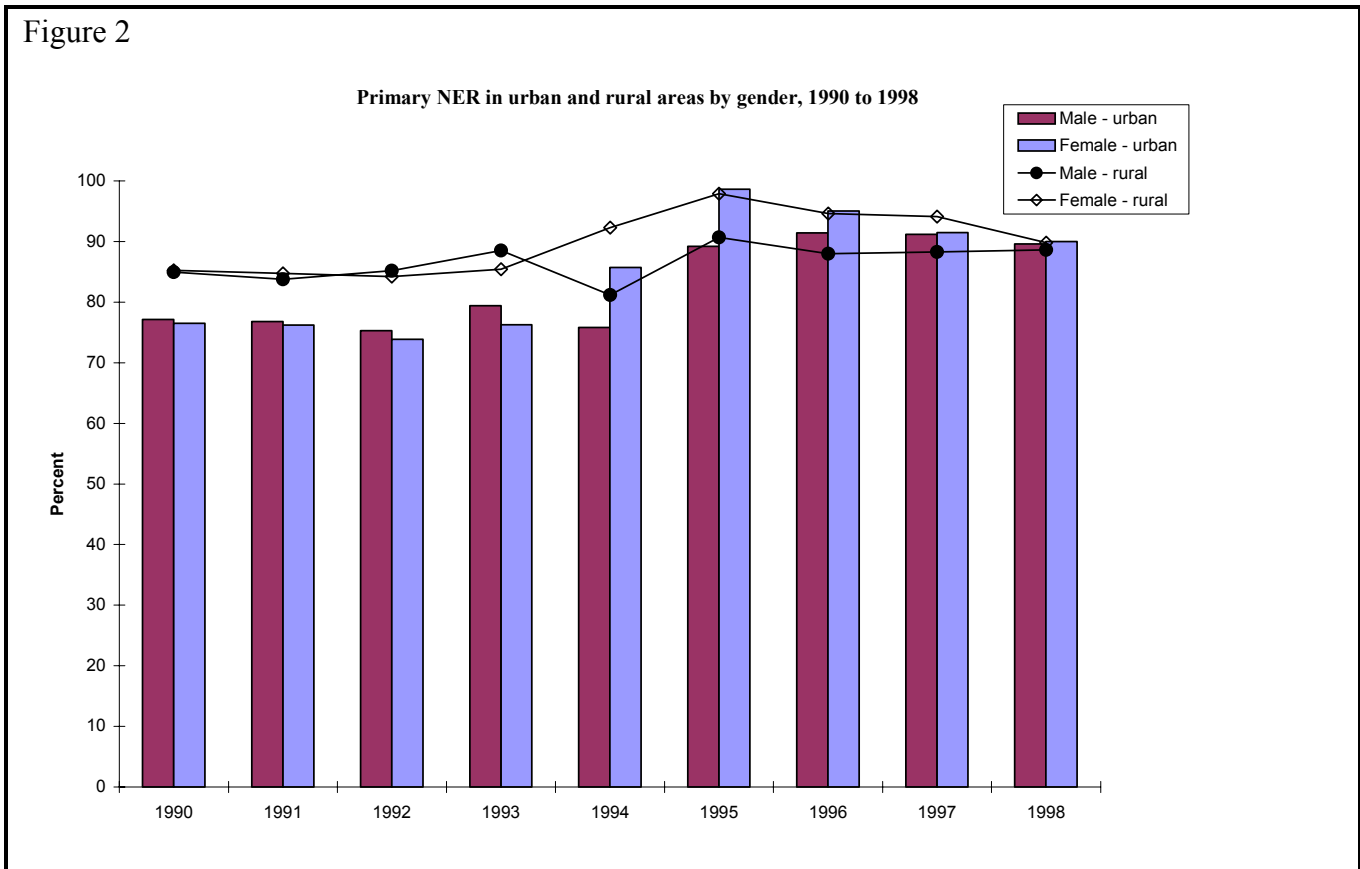
Government of Azerbaijan, *Education for All Assessment, 1999:32*)

It can be seen from Figure 2 that the overall decline in NER over the late 1990's is due to a fall in the proportion of girls attending school. The NER of boys has remained steady at about 90% while that of girls has decreased from a peak of 98% in 1995 to 90% in 1998.

According to the EFA Assessment, the apparent difference in NERs of girls and boys in 1994 and 1995 is most likely due to the change of the enrollment age in primary schools.

Figure 2 shows boys' and girls' NER, separately for rural and urban areas. The increase in girls' NER during the mid-1990's is greater in urban areas (1994: 9.4% and 1995: 10%) than in rural areas (1994: 6.9% and 1995: 8.6%) and the decline in female NER from 1997 to 1998 is greater in rural areas (-4.3%) than in urban areas (-1.5%).

Figure 2



*(Ministry of Education, 1999. *Education for All: The Year 2000 Assessment*, 1999:32).

The Ministry of Education estimates high rates of retention:

	Estimated Retention ⁶
Grades 1-4	98%
Grades 5-9	92-95%
Grades 10-11	92-95%

School Wastage Study concludes that “assuming these figures are accurate, 7-8 percent of primary school age children can be understood not to be enrolled in school in Azerbaijan, with overall drop out rates of approximately 2-8 percent⁷. (2000: 9) As a consequence, *traditional wastage* can be said to be low *at aggregate levels*, and as measured by *existing* statistics.” It can be assume that this 7-8% are going to include the most difficult cases to reach, and that among these children, girls may be particularly vulnerable.

However, these rates are not unchallenged: the World Bank Poverty Assessment in 1997 put the enrollment figures at closer to 80%, taking absenteeism into account, and the Bank’s Azerbaijan Country Assessment Strategy presents similarly low figures for the period, generally.

The factors associated with general wastage and of the consequences and possible outcomes of reduced investment are analyzed in the School Wastage Study (2000). The remainder of the current report focuses on girls’ education, specifically.

C. Girls’ Education

Despite its economic problems, and taking into account the statistical quandaries that persist, Azerbaijan appears to have met and exceeded two of the three summit goals in relation to education/girls’ education as outlined at the World Summit for Children in 1990:

- Universal access to basic education and achievement of primary education by at least 80% of primary school-age children through formal schooling and non-formal education of comparable learning standard, with emphasis on reducing the current disparities between boys and girls (the recorded gender parity in primary schools for all years since 1992 has been 1.0)

and

- Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate to at least half its 1990 level, with emphasis on female literacy. (Adult literacy in Azerbaijan, by almost all accounts, is estimated to be close to 100%, with no gender differences).

⁶ From interviews with Ministry of Education officials, these estimates were based on experience and preliminary examination of data forthcoming in September.

⁷ Being estimates of overall retention, it is difficult to assess what the drop out rates are for each year of school and, more important, cumulatively. An annual drop out rate of 2 percent each year has quite different implications than an overall primary drop out rate of 2 percent, presumably the Ministry’s estimate. Hopefully, more precise figures will be available in September when census and school enrollment data are made available.

a. Assessment and causes of girls' dropout at compulsory level

Even if, as some informants claim, schools inflate numbers because they are tied to budget allocations, it is unlikely that such inflation would be gender-biased. Reports from parents may be more problematic: parents may be reluctant to report absenteeism or dropouts because schooling is compulsory, and the distribution of vulnerable children by gender is not clear. Some of the groups, such as young prostitutes, pregnant teen-agers and young mothers, are obvious. The fact that fertility is dropping in all age groups except the 15-19 year age group is disturbing, since education is compulsory to age 17, and at least some proportion of this group are therefore school dropouts. Others, such as refugees, appear to be equally distributed. The gender distribution of working children, including street children and children on the street, is more deceptive. It seems clear, from two previous studies⁸ and from interviews, that most street children (working/living in the street) are boys, but working girls are often "invisible", assisting or replacing the mother at home in doing domestic tasks, caring for younger siblings and the sick, carrying out domestic production, etc.⁹

Internationally, causes of girls' dropout, lower attendance and poorer performance generally fall into four major categories:

1) *Financial hardship, which may have implications for both sexes but almost invariably has greater impact on girls, since*

- *families may be reluctant to invest scarce resources in girls, who will "marry into" another family; or will marry and not "need" expensive education; or will be unemployed or poorly paid as adults because of limited opportunities for women. Traditional marriage roles, and lack of adult female role models contribute to these problems.*
- *universally, from birth to puberty, girls mature earlier and are able to and often expected to assume responsibility earlier.*
- *women everywhere work longer hours at domestic activities, and are usually not relieved of this responsibility when they enter the paid work force. Girls are often called upon to assist adult women in the household and in local domestic productive activities, leading to absenteeism, poorer performance in school, repetition and dropout.*

2) *A belief in girls' greater vulnerability to physical and cultural dangers*

- *families may be concerned about rape by teachers, male students or older men who expect sexual favors in return for assistance with school fees, etc. Pregnancy outside marriage is also a major concern in most cultures. Either of these outcomes may reflect unfavorably on the family, and the girl may be unmarriageable. Distance from school, lack of female teachers, and coeducational education all contribute to parents' fears. Families may also be concerned that their girls may be attracted to inappropriate mates.*

⁸Operational Research on Street Children, 2000.

⁹In a 1995 study of 500 child interviewees working in the street, 90% were of compulsory school age, and 77% per cent lived with one or both parents. Eighty per cent were boys, engaged in a variety of activities such as selling, washing cars, etc., but among the small number of girls, nearly half were prostitutes.

- *families may be concerned that girls will lose their cultural/religious values, become dissatisfied with the status quo and wish to leave the community in pursuit of more education, or a career; or they become “overeducated” and lose their attractiveness as prospective daughters-in-law.*

3) A mistaken common belief that boys and girls differ significantly in mental abilities and aptitudes, and that generally, boys are a better educational investment (see Kane, 1996 for a review of the research on this subject). Sometimes this arises from cultural stereotypes, and is often aggravated by better performance of boys on examinations in situations when girls are handicapped by greater domestic responsibilities, less study time, gender discrimination in the classroom and in textbooks; and their own lowered expectations.

4) Early marriage: families may believe that is either a religious requirement, or is socially desirable that girls marry early. This in turn aggravates the factors mentioned above: girl’s education is “wasted”; girls’ morality/marriageability must be protected; and girls must be educated in domestic responsibilities, all of which limit their participation in school.

Which of these factors are relevant in Azerbaijan? Each one of those outlined above, in varying degrees, has a role to play.

Financial hardship

Given the economic situation of the average household over the last half of the 1990’s, in which nearly three-quarters of households have been using 70% of their expenditure on food, and in which, in 1997 an average wage could purchase only two-fifths of a minimum consumer basket (UNICEF 1999: 17), it is not surprising that the effects of financial hardship are paramount, everywhere. These will continue to be a major factor in children’s education for some period to come.

Particularly vulnerable are rural children, refugees, and children of the lowest income groups, refugees/internally displaced persons, and orphans. Some of these will be out of school because their parents cannot afford the direct costs associated with schooling Others, however, will either be out of school, or have high absenteeism because they are working. In a 1995 study of working street children, 90% of who were of school age, but more than half of whom were not attending school, 77% were living with one or both parents, and most of the rest with a relative. The major reason they gave for their work was financial hardship at home. (Street Children Survey, 1995: 7)¹⁰

Another especially vulnerable but largely undocumented group is likely to be poor rural girls and girls who can assist with domestic productive activities. An examination of the child labor figures in a recent report shows where further information would be helpful.

Child Labor

¹⁰ A more recent study of street children was carried out in 2000 but it is virtually unusable in its current form.

The Multiple-Indicator Cluster Study, a nationally representative survey of 6166 households (the State Statistics Committee/UNICEF 2000) shows that 13 per cent of children aged 5-14 are “currently working.” This figure includes children who are doing paid or unpaid work for someone other than a household member, or who spent more than four hours per day in housekeeping tasks. According to the study, while the figures show virtually no difference between boys and girls (but see below), there are large variations across regions, urban-rural residence, household wealth, and age of the child. One in five children in Nakhcivan is currently working; as is nearly one in ten older children aged 10-14 years. Most remarkable is the class difference: “only 5 percent of children in rich households are currently working, while the corresponding figure for children in poor households is 22 percent.”

Table 1: Percentage of children 5-14 years of age who are currently working, Azerbaijan, 2000

		Domestic work:				Family work	Currently working	Number of children
		Paid work	Unpaid work					
				< 4 hours/day	4 or more hours/day			
Sex	Male	.3	5.2	49.2	3.8	6.1	13.6	3082
	Female	.2	4.9	57.0	6.8	1.8	12.3	2891
Region	Baku area	.3	1.3	49.9	2.3	1.2	4.6	1478
	Nakhcivan	.4	3.7	56.2	12.4	8.7	20.2	242
	Center, North	.1	5.2	54.7	7.9	4.8	16.6	2247
	West, Southwest	.7	6.1	57.2	5.1	6.3	15.2	1173
	South	.1	10.1	47.1	1.3	2.4	13.1	833
Area	Urban	.2	2.6	53.0	3.4	1.9	7.6	3061
	Rural	.3	7.6	53.0	7.1	6.3	18.7	2912
Household Status	Resident	.2	5.4	53.7	5.4	4.1	13.4	5379
	IDP or Refugee	.5	2.0	46.5	3.7	3.7	9.1	594
Household Wealth	Poor	.7	8.6	55.5	8.5	7.4	21.5	1371
	Middle	.1	4.7	52.4	4.5	3.5	11.7	3751
	Rich	.5	.7	51.7	3.1	0.9	4.9	851
Age	5-9 years	.2	3.3	42.5	1.3	2.5	6.6	2813
	10-14 years	.3	6.6	62.3	8.7	5.4	18.7	3160
Total		.3	5.0	53.0	5.2	4.0	13.0	5973

(State Statistics Committee/UNICEF, 2000: *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey*)

However, when we look at “domestic work” only, (cooking, shopping, cleaning, washing clothes, fetching water, and caring for children), a higher percentage of girls than boys (6.8% vs. 3.8%) are working more than four hours a day, as are older children (8.7% in the 10-14 year old category, vs. 1.8% in the 5-9 year old category.) Unfortunately, the study does not disaggregate the rural/urban, class or age categories by gender but it would be surprising if poor rural girls in regions outside Baku did not emerge at the top of the table: in many rural communities families assume that it is natural for girls in the age group 12-14 to assume many of the housekeeping and even the agricultural tasks of adult women.

The domestic division of labor between women and men is marked and traditional, even in urban areas among middle and rich groups who are well educated. Men believe that they have the main responsibility for supporting the family; women assume almost all responsibility for domestic work except for activities such as repair of domestic equipment.¹¹ Women in employment complain of the

¹¹ In the last decade, no information is available for average time spent in unpaid domestic work by sex, but figures for 1990 show that women spend a little over three and a half hours a day, with the greatest amount of time spent on traditional housework, cooking, washing, childcare, etc.), and less than half an hour on shopping. Men, on the other hand, were spending about an hour, and spending more time on shopping than women, but the majority of their time devoted to an unspecified category called ‘other housework.’

burden of two full-time jobs; men who perform any household tasks think of this of as “helping” the woman, rather than as one of their responsibilities. Girls, therefore, are a major source of household assistance to overburdened mothers. This can affect girls’ enrollment, attendance and performance in school.

Limited opportunities and role models for women:

Although all Azeri parents want education for their children, if girls’ occupational prospects are more limited or lower paid than those of boys, poorer parents may conclude that boys’ education has a better “rate of return.” If resources are scarce, poorer parents will be more reluctant to expend what little they have on a girl’s education if they think that her future career and earning possibilities are poor. Some figures in other areas of education give a hint that such parental preferences may already be the case: for example, the fact that there is a lower percentage of girls than boys in kindergarten, where attendance is voluntary; and boys’ better performance in higher education entrance exams, which has been attributed by some to parents’ greater willingness to employ special tutors for boys. This decision is strengthened if, at the same time, a girl’s labor is useful at home. Despite the lack of useful gender-disaggregated statistics at primary, main and secondary general level, we can look at the activities of girls and women at secondary and tertiary level, and at occupations of adult women, to predict what women are and will be doing, what role models girls have now and what opportunities they will have in the future, and, of course, what prospects parents are seeing when they plan their children’s education.

Women formed 48% of the economically active population in 1999 (those in any age group who are employed or officially registered as unemployed); and they form 47% of the employed population. At the moment, women are somewhat “ghettoized” in certain kinds of occupations. Predictably, on the basis of educational specialization, they form over three-quarters of the personnel in health and social work, two-thirds in education, and over half in community, social and personal services; and in public administration. Men dominate all other areas. (Woman and Men in Azerbaijan 2000) Generally women’s wages represent less than two-thirds of men’s, varying from 83% in communications, to 50% in oil and gas extraction. Women teachers, who form 70% of the field, earn only 70% of men’s wages. Males form more than half of the teacher in non-state high education institutions. (State Statistics Committee, unpublished statistics, 42), and men are said to outnumber women as educational administrators and managers by six to one (UNDP, *Women in Azerbaijan*, 1999.) Although women predominate in medicine (61% of doctors are women, the sex distribution in relation to higher qualifications (longer service, refresher courses) is closer to 50%. (unpublished statistics, p. 85) . The percentage of women parliamentarians has declined sharply, falling from 40% in 1985 to 12% in 2000. (National Statistics Committee, 2000, *Women and Men in Azerbaijan*:108)

A gender division is even more marked in higher realms of academic life and science: of seventy-nine academicians/corresponding members, only 4 are women. . In scientific organizations, while the sex ratio of specialists is 56/44 male/female, male specialists predominate in every field except the

humanities, which are almost equally divided. In all other areas, including the social and natural sciences, males predominate. (State Statistics Committee, unpublished statistics).

These adult occupations are reflected in the educational choices that students are currently making. In the school year 2000/2001, females at secondary vocational education institutions form 70% of the students, and comprise almost 100% of the those studying education, public health and natural sciences, while males form 90-100% of students in marine engineering and navigation, transport, machine building, equipment service, and timber-related activities; over 80% of those studying exploration and extraction of minerals, energetics and energetic machine building; and at least two thirds in chemical technology, agriculture, architecture, and radio engineering and communication. (Education 2001:33)

These trends are also reflected in higher studies, although at state higher education institutions, the sex ratio changes: 58% of students are male. Among the 960 students currently pursuing a licentiate degree, a third are women, and they form more than half the students in philology, biology, psychology, veterinary science, medicine, history, and geology and mineralogy. The sexes are equally divided in pharmaceuticals and pedagogics, and in the remaining fields, males form about 75% or more of the students in economics, architecture, law, technology, geography, agriculture and politics, and about two-thirds of the students in physics and mathematics, sociology and philosophy.

Among the small number of people currently studying for doctorates (seven women, forty men) women are represented in only three fields: the arts, which accounts for over half of female students, chemistry (29%) and philology (14%). The most popular fields for males are medicine and technology, but the remainder are more widely spread over most of the fields mentioned in the discussion on the licentiate.(unpublished State Statistics Committee, unpublished statistics).

What else are girls and their parents seeing, as future educational/occupational prospects? An analysis of newspaper job advertisements, in both Azeri and English-language newspapers, over a two-week period showed that approximately one in five advertisements specified the preferred sex of applicants: for example “chief accountant, male preferable” (Baku Sun September 7, 2001); “woman ophthalmologist (*Super Market*, Sept. 7, 2001). Most often, however, lower-level office jobs advertisements specify “young woman” or “girls and women” and may mention appearance. In the same issue of *Super Market*, for example, “good looking” girls are required, who must also know English, Azeri and Russian and computer skills. Another in the *Baku Sun* on August 31, 2001 specifies “female between 24-34 years old, good looking with pleasant personality. One ad requires “well-behaved women”. Large expensive ads placed by international companies may also specify sex of applicants. No ad mentions male appearance, behavior or age.

These facts are critical, and will drive the future. All the figures show the shape of things to come—occupational differences by gender are marked, and a clear program of action will have to be taken if women are to contribute fully to the development of Azerbaijan in the new century.

Textbooks

Finally, it appears that girls do not even play a prominent role in their own textbooks: a sample gender analysis of a textbook selected at random, Grade 2 Reading (2001) shows a bias, in terms of a disproportionate representation of the numbers of men and boys, and of the activities of each of the sexes. The following table of the pictures in the text illustrates this (the text is quite simple, and Azeri does not contain gender modifiers):

Table 2: Gender Analysis of Representations in Grade 2 Textbook

People/ Activity	Male	Female
King and soldiers	✓ (group)	
children swimming and fishing*	✓ (group)	
Child flying a kite	✓	
Forester	✓	
Builder	✓	
oil worker	✓	
Pilot	✓	
Smith	✓	
Shepherd hunter	✓	
Poor person and rich person	✓✓	
Shepherd	✓	
President	✓	
Older and younger person	✓	
four postal workers	✓✓	✓✓
parent and child	✓	✓
Astronaut	✓	
parent with child	✓	✓
Older and younger sibling	✓✓	
Musicians and singer	✓ (group)	
Pilot	✓	
Sailor	✓	
Tanker	✓	
Soldier	✓	
Tanker	✓	
Soldiers	✓✓	
ancient commanders and troop	✓ (group)	
Child helping border guards	✓	
children misbehaving at a picnic	✓ (group)	
Weaver		✓
doctor or nurse		✓
Parent		✓
Doctor		✓
Parent		✓
Person		✓
person churning		✓

* This is a country scene, and according to custom, rural girls generally do not swim. An urban beach scene shows both sexes and all ages.

Almost all other scenes are general group scenes.

This depiction reflects a pattern that is often found in textbooks, internationally: males are shown as emancipators, leaders, heroes, problem solvers, inventors, and rescuers of others. They engage in mischief, are adventuresome, and even when girls initiate an idea, it is likely to be boys who carry it through. Girls, on the other hand, are frightened, inept in relation to technology, easily duped or surprised, require rescue, and are shown crying or distressing situations. Women and girls provide a support role for men's/boys' activities. In the text, they tend to be interrupted more often, both in speech and in their activities. (For a review of the research on this subject, see Kane, 1996)

Concern about girls' cultural and physical safety

Women in Azerbaijan have been described as keepers of many of its cultural traditions: "Azerbaijan women, due to national and religious norms, have been the main guaranties of traditions in the family, keeping and practicing traditional rites and skills such as caret-making and embroidery...." (UNDP, *Women of Azerbaijan*: 75) Often, as noted earlier, women, seen as embodying the heart of national culture, experience a limitation in some of their rights after major "revolutions" in a nation's history. There is no evidence of this at official level: the Constitution guarantees equal rights for men and women; in 1995, Azerbaijan joined the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), various bodies have been established in relation to gender and women's issues, and Azerbaijani law also offers a number of protections in marriage, such as those found in the Marriage and Family Code.

However, the enforcement of some of these is problematic, according to a UNDP report (*Women of Azerbaijan*, 1999: 17-23), and law and cultural tradition may differ: in the same report, the structure of the family is described as "patriarchal" and preliminary observation and interviews for the current study suggest that men enjoy greater decision-making powers in the household in relation to major purchases, whether the wife works outside the home, marriage of children, etc., although decisions about children's education are said to fall more in the realm of women. It is interesting to note that in one school visit, when boys' and girls' were asked about their career aspirations, their choices did not overlap except in the selection of "lawyer" as an occupation for both sexes. All girls chose professional occupations, the most common of which was "doctor"; boys' more common choices were "police", "judge", and "lawyer". Most notable, however, was the fact that when the boys were asked what occupation they would like their future wives to have, almost all said "housewife." Girls who see their mothers holding full-time jobs, one in perhaps badly paid employment and one at home, may eventually concur in this choice. This impromptu research should be followed up.

Rural areas and IDP tent camps are more likely at the moment to be affected by concerns about girls' physical security: distance from school has been suggested in some accounts as a reason for not sending some girls to school.

Beliefs about girls' abilities

Generally, professional gender research in Azerbaijan is thoughtful and makes important contributions to our understanding of the situation. This report has been able to draw very useful insights from a variety of articles and publications arising from such research. However, a few stereotypes and outdated concepts persist in the literature: for example, a seeming acceptance in some passages that the “the head of household” is male. A more subtle stereotype is contained in a suggestion about the failure of “scientific conceptions” and the value of replacing male “rationality” and “logic” with a more holistic, phenomenological approach, which is equated with female “intuition” and “emotional manner.” While it is unlikely that many modern philosophers and scientists would accept some of the underlying concepts in this discussion, it is unfortunate that gender abilities are polarized so dramatically, without qualification or explanation.

There appears to be a belief, even among some highly educated people, that since men and women are physically different, they also have different mental abilities. Men are thought to be mentally tougher, more rational, more scientific and more mechanical. Even when women are thought to be better at something, such as accountancy or teaching, the reasons given rather patronizing: they are “better at detailed work” or “more sensitive”. One senior educator, interviewed for this report, hoped to encourage more girls to go into math and the sciences, stating that girls were more likely to be better in these fields because of their “attention to details.” It is worth pursuing these stereotypes in a further study, because they will affect women's job opportunities, and eventually, the educational choices they make or are directed toward.

Early marriage

The legal age of marriage for girls in Azerbaijan is 17, but some girls from very traditional families in rural areas marry earlier. In some cases, this is considered desirable for religious reasons. Parents may also feel that early marriage frees them from the need to guard their daughters' virginity and future marriage prospects. Such girls would be unlikely to continue their schooling. Also, the fact that the 15-19 year old age group is the only group whose fertility rates are not declining means that some school-age mothers, married or not, are not in school.

b. Strategies for Improving Girls' Participation in Education

Kane (1998) has reviewed nearly 2500 articles on girls' education to determine which strategies have been shown to be effective. Some of the strategies that have been used in various countries are listed in Appendix 4. The conclusions that emerged from this analysis show that there are very few strategies that can be said to have been proven effective in every circumstance: alternative programs (community schools, NGO nonformal education programs, and literacy programs for out-of-school girls) are one. Interactive learning, bilingual education, scholarships, local and female teachers, programmed learning and single-sex schools had positive and statistically successful outcomes in some contexts, and not in others.

In Azerbaijan, it is too early to invest scarce resources in strategies that may turn out to be ill founded or inappropriate to local circumstances. While no strategy is likely to damage girls' prospects, it is important that, given the current economic situation, any strategies be carefully chosen, and based on a clearer picture of what groups are being affected, and why. This makes some form of community-focused research even more urgent.

III. Recommendations

1. Statistics

As the Government of Azerbaijan-UNICEF's *Programme of Cooperation, 2000-2004* has noted, the restricted range of variables covered in current official statistical information makes the analysis of educational participation difficult. The fact that data published between the two censuses was based on estimates, and the estimates are now being retrospectively revised, makes it difficult to assume that past assessments and recommendations based on the figures are, in fact, useful.

In particular, one of the variables that is not adequately reflected in current official educational statistics is gender: most published statistical information on education, other than state secondary vocational, technical and higher levels, is not disaggregated by sex. Indeed, many people involved in education are under the impression that such data is not collected, when, according to officials of the State Statistics Committee, it is simply not published. In any event, the quality of such data, as noted in The Government of Azerbaijan-UNICEF's *Programme of Cooperation, 2000-2004*, is highly input-based, contradictory, and irrelevant to many of the concerns of women and children. By the year 2002, the State Statistics Committee reports that it expects to publish disaggregated information that will facilitate more detailed analysis and the development of international comparisons.

Recommendation #1a: Following on the recommendations related to the improvement of statistical information in Azerbaijan as presented in the Government of Azerbaijan-UNICEF's Programme of Cooperation, 2000-2004, trends in girls' educational access, participation and achievement should be carefully monitored through collection and publication of indicators that meet international conventions and the needs of educational analysts. Some of the indicators listed in Appendix 1 are already included in census data; it is worth looking at others in the list in order to monitor participation and achievement as well as access. As national assessments at basic level take place, they should also assess achievement by gender, and be designed to identify explanatory factors, should discrepancies occur.

However, limited government resources make it unlikely that this recommendation, and the data resulting from it, will be available in the near future. In the meantime, some useful sample data, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods can be obtained using the approaches mentioned in Recommendations # 1b and #2.

As with all statistical information, understanding of context is critical, so data from other approaches such as household surveys, specialized reports, academic studies, and even anthropological and sociological case studies will be necessary.

Recommendation #1b: The institutional partners in educational programme management should be encouraged to undertake qualitative and quantitative research on access, participation by gender, and to encourage such research among students pursuing higher degrees.

Such partners should include research institutions and university departments that focus on education, gender, science and culture, including newly established bodies such as the State Institute for Education Issues and Problems, the Gender Scientific and Education Center at Baku State University and gender programs at other universities.

2. Getting Information and Creating Action

Obviously, this macro-level information will not be available in the immediate future, but most experts agree that certain groups are clearly vulnerable, rural girls and girls in isolated areas, IDP and refugee children, street and working children, and girls who have heavy domestic responsibilities. On the basis of this short study, financial hardship appears, to be the main threat to vulnerable girls, although a small proportion of girls will be affected by cultural traditions described in the report.

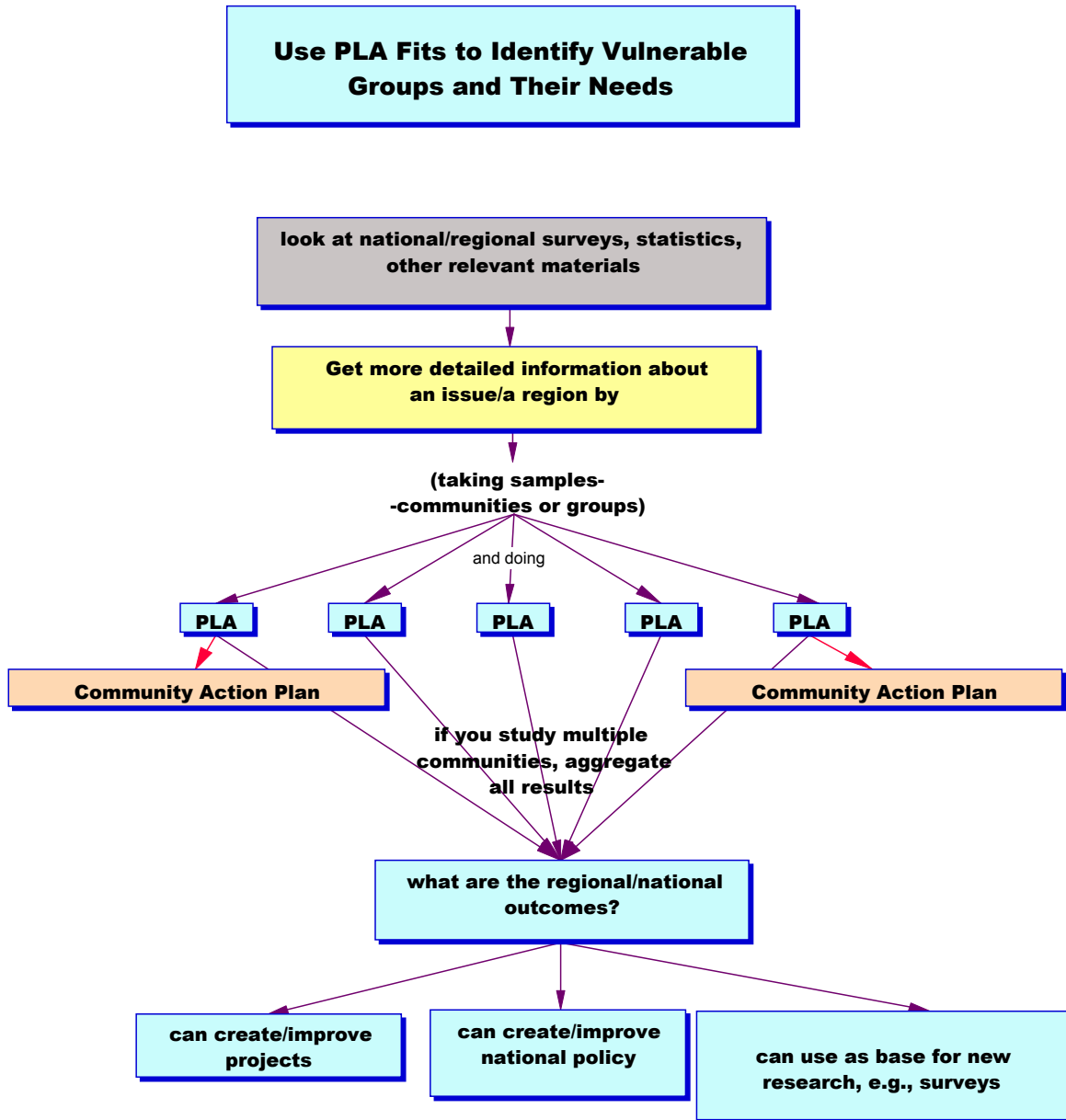
These vulnerable groups can be studied immediately, without waiting for improvements in national reporting procedures. The author of this report might be expected to recommend an “in-depth” anthropological study, as was suggested in her original terms of reference. However, while such a study might provide a good picture of local culture and the issues in a particular area, the idea is impractical for at least three reasons: broader-scale information is required; the major barriers to girls’ full participation in education appear to be financial, rather than cultural; and anthropological research takes longer than most organizations are prepared to tolerate and fund.

However, there is another option: participants at a workshop offered during this consultancy were introduced to a form of research and action, Participatory Learning and Action, which allows researchers and local people to work together to identify issues, select options, create action plans, and organize for action. The results of these processes are three-fold: they lead to local action plans; they can be aggregated and used for regional or national policy or planning; and they can build local capacity. For example, they can be used to identify which actions can be taken by the local group or community itself, and which should be done by NGOs, international agencies or government. Once local people go through this process, they are usually able to use it themselves on later occasions for other kinds of problems in education or in other sectors. Finally, if the groups or communities are chosen carefully, by a probability or a purposive sampling process, the results of these methods, many of which are qualitative, can be aggregated and used to as part of the Ministry of Education-UNICEF plan for Comprehensive Educational Analysis, to tailor existing programmes and create new ones, or

to shape policy. They can also help to pinpoint topics that need more study—for example, more relevant and improved questions for a national or regional survey.

The following diagram shows the process:

Diagram 1: Using PLA for Girls' Education in Azerbaijan



Recommendation #2: As part of its rights-based and child-centered approach to education, a national team consisting of at least twelve men and women (reflecting an appropriate range of age, language and ethnic groups) should be trained in Participatory Learning and Action approaches. This training takes approximately three weeks and must be carried out by experienced researchers who have successfully used these techniques. Appendix 2 contains appropriate terms of reference for potential trainers. The national team should then carry out the process shown in the diagram, perhaps in the Ministry of Education/UNICEF's Education for Development pilot school areas, and certainly among children of low income and unemployed parents, street and working children, children in selected rural areas, young single mothers and any other vulnerable groups, some of which will not be identified until the local research is underway.

Their studies should include some of the items that are clearly missing in this study. For example,

- who are the vulnerable groups in an area, and what barriers do they face?
- what aspirations do parents have for girls and boys?
- what beliefs do parents, teachers and children have about boys' and girls' abilities, about the division of labor between boys and girls, men and women?
- what parents want their children to learn, academically and behaviorally, and where/how/from whom should they learn these abilities?
- what is the daily time use on the part of women, men, boys and girls?
- what are teachers doing, and what problems do teachers face?
- what skills and abilities do employers need?

Such an approach will also help to identify children in need of special protection, and can feed information into the Comprehensive Educational Analysis which the Government of Azerbaijan-UNICEF's *Programme of Cooperation, 2000-2004* has undertaken. Because Participatory Learning and Action, by its very nature, is intersectoral, it should also be useful to a range of UNICEF and Ministry of Education objectives.

3. Building Girls' Awareness and Addressing Stereotypes

Figures clearly show that women are concentrated in a small number of professions and occupations, and within those, are poorly represented at management level. Women are also poorly represented in other areas of public life, such as higher university position and politics. This will not change unless those in Government and other influential people help parents and girls themselves to see beyond the current horizon and unless schools, colleges and employers work to counter the stereotypes.

Recommendation #3: the Government/UNICEF should develop a comprehensive national project to improve girls' awareness of and confidence in their ability to participate in a wider range of careers, and to work with employers and schools to address stereotypes about suitable occupations for women. Once again, this might be pioneered in the Ministry of Education-UNICEF's pilot communities. Another vehicle might be the Girls' Clubs to be established under Government Resolution #33, in conjunction with the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Tourism, the Ministry of Education, the Gender in Development (GID) Unit's gender awareness program, the Department for Social Issues, Baku State University's gender studies program, the State Committee on Women's and the 40+ women's NGOs in Azerbaijan.

UNICEF's film, *Meena*, which has been adapted for use in many countries, or a similar product (film, brochure, curriculum components) developed for Azerbaijan's various regions, could be used as part of this project, in a sensitization program in schools and with youth groups.

4. Addressing Bias in Textbooks

In recent years, textbooks have been translated from Russian to Azeri, and more recently, new Azeri textbooks have been developed. This study looked at only one: a Grade 2 reader, which was clearly gender-biased. Gender analysis involves not only looking at the most blatant stereotypes, but examining which sex is represented most frequently in words and pictures, who initiates activities, whose activities are professionalised ("father is a 'trader'"; "mother 'sells vegetables'"); who is mentioned by name as opposed to role or relationship ("Ali and his sister"); who rescues, solves, puts things right, takes risks; gets into creative mischief; and conversely, who gets interrupted most often, receives the most orders, exhibits fear or incompetence, etc.

Gender analysis of textbooks is a highly skilled activity. Specialists should be encouraged/supported to undertake such analysis of at least several textbooks, as the basis for gender sensitivity training workshops for curriculum reviewers and developers, writers, teachers and other stakeholders.

Recommendation #4: UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, perhaps as part of their Comprehensive Educational Analysis, should commission a gender analysis of primary school textbooks, using standard conventions of gender analysis (see Appendix 3 for sample questions). If patterns of bias are identified, teachers should be shown how to compensate for this until new textbooks are introduced.

Also, although there was very little time for classroom observation during the course of this study, observation of a class of 13 years olds showed some patterns worth analyzing in a systematic way. Are girls called upon less often, disproportionately? What happens when a child gives a correct answer (a frequent pattern, internationally, is that boys are praised more often than girls. What

happens when a child gives an incorrect answer? Once again, the international pattern is that boys are helped more often to reach the correct answer, while girls are passed over. Who does the “housekeeping” work in the classroom? These and a number of other questions should be applied to a systematic classroom management analysis.

5. Strategies for Improving Girls’ Participation in Education

Given the lack of research on vulnerable local groups in Azerbaijan and the specific barriers they face, it is important not to move too quickly to develop national strategies for addressing problems that may be better addressed by some other means. Kane (1998) has outlined some strategies that have been shown to work, and others that worked only in certain contexts.

Recommendation #5: using an approach such as Participatory Learning and Action, make the best use of limited resources by identifying groups at risk and assessing their needs and possible options for addressing such needs before deploying strategies that have worked elsewhere but may not be the most effective for various communities in Azerbaijan.

This is the first time in centuries that Azerbaijan has functioned as an independent nation, and except for very short periods in the past, the first time that its current geographic boundaries have outlined the nation. There is clearly a lot human potential in Azerbaijan, and its value on education and intellectual tradition is strong. One interviewee told me that in the past, as an honorific title, one could address a person as “teacher” and it would carry the same respect as “your excellency” might in other countries. Other small nations, with far fewer natural resources, have used such values to build modern, thriving economies—the author’s own country, Ireland is a current example of the contribution a highly educated population can make to the world.

There is an old Azeri saying: what you put in the pot, you get out. Now is the time to see what is being put into the pot for girls, and as a result, what kinds of contributions what women will be able to make to make to Azerbaijan of the 21st century.

Appendix 1: Some Education Indicators for Gender Analysis

Indicator Number	Indicator (Abbreviation)	Definition
1	Gross Primary Enrollment Ratio (GPE)	Percentage of age group enrolled in primary school
2	Admission Rate (PAR)	Percentage of 6-year olds (or other official entry age group) enrolled in grade 1, primary level
3	Gross Secondary Enrollment Ratio (GSE)	Percentage of age group enrolled in secondary school
4	Gross Tertiary Enrollment Ratio (GTE)	Percentage of age group enrolled in tertiary level institutions
5	Enrollment in Sciences-- Tertiary (SCI)	Enrollment of male and female students in the Sciences, expressed as a percentage of all male and female students
6	Persistence – Primary (PER)	Percentage of cohort persisting to Grade 4 (i.e., the percentage of children starting primary school in 1985 who continued to Grade 4 by 1988)
7	Completion Rate – Primary (COMP)	Percentage of Grade 1 entrants persisting to the final grade of primary school
8	Completion Rate – Secondary (COMS)	Percentage of Grade 1 entrants persisting to the final grade of general secondary school
9	Continuation Rate from Primary to Secondary (CONTSP)	Percentage of enrollment in the last grade of primary continuing to the first grade of general secondary school in the next year
10	Continuation Rate from Secondary to Tertiary (CONTST)	Percentage of enrollment in the last grade of general secondary continuing to the first level of tertiary (new entrants)
11	Repetition Rate – Primary (REPP)	Repeaters at the primary level as a percentage of total primary enrollment
12	Repetition Rate - Secondary (REPS)	Repeaters at the secondary level as a percentage of total secondary enrollment

Indicator Number	Indicator (Abbreviation)	Definition
13	Mean Years of Schooling (YRSSCH)	Female rates are expressed in relation to the male average, which is indexed to equal 100
14	Literacy (LIT)	Literate population as a percentage of the population age 15 and above
EMPLOYMENT		
15	Labor Force Participation Rate (LAB)	Percentage of population of all ages in the labor force. (The labor force is the "economically active" population, including the armed forces and the unemployed, but excluding homemakers and other unpaid caregivers)
16	Teachers - Primary (TCHP)	Male and female teachers as a percentage of the total number of teachers
17	Teachers--Secondary (TCHS)	Male and female teachers as a percentage of the total number of teachers
18	Teachers--Tertiary (TCHT)	Male and female teachers as a percentage of the total number of teachers

Appendix 2: Terms of Reference for PLA Trainers

The consultant should have experience in both conventional (both qualitative and quantitative) and in participatory approaches. S/he should be able to assess which tools are appropriate to your requirements, and be able to combine them as needed. Surveys, for example are not common in participatory approaches, but sometimes a survey is essential, and the option for using one should be there. It is a good idea to ask to see a past report or study (not a training programme) produced by the consultant, using participatory research methods. Do not hire a ‘para-researcher’ as the main consultant—designing a project such as this requires someone who has a foundation in broad research design.

Writing terms of reference for a consultant

Here are some items to consider when preparing terms of reference:

- The consultant will design the research, drawing upon both conventional and participatory approaches for research (and if appropriate, for organizing the group or community for action). At a minimum, the design will show

Issues and questions	How each of these will be addressed (techniques/processes)	What information/outcome will emerge from each
1.		
2.		
3.		

The consultant will:

- prepare a sampling design (if sampling is relevant, as it will be if you want your data to reflect larger populations);
- prepare a plan for collecting, recording, aggregating and analyzing the data. If this is not done, you could end up with vignettes, a few attractive diagrams and some data that will be dismissed as interesting but anecdotal;
- outline the resources and materials required for the team’s work. This does not refer to the training, although you may wish to ask for this, but rather the actual team work—for example, a team can founder on practical issues of transport, which can be a major expense, as well;
- provide (assist in, advise on) the criteria for selection of trainees for the team;
- provide a training manual and any other materials needed to train the team. Indicate any other training materials needed;
- train a team or teams in participatory research methods, or supervise the training;
- prepare a protocol of instructions and recording templates for the team(s);
- prepare a logistical plan for the team’s work;

- prepare a plan for monitoring the work. Often, well-prepared teams, with a designated team leader, can carry out the work with supervision from a distance—this is usually the case if the consultant/trainer does not speak the language(s) involved, or if there are multiple teams working in different areas simultaneously. In this case, a system must be set up so that the consultant monitors their progress. One way involves the team preparing multiple copies of all recorded materials that the consultant monitors.
- supervise the team in aggregating and analyzing the data. Ideally, this should be done at least two points in the project, to allow for correction of problems, and to take an iterative approach by building later steps and approaches on what the team has learned so far.
- perform the final analysis and prepare the report according to the format required.

Appendix 3: Sample Questions for Gender Analysis

Other Qualitative Approaches (quoted in Chapter 13, Seeing for Yourself, by Eileen Kane, World Bank, Washington DC, 1995)

Box 13-1. Gender Sensitivity Indicators: Criteria for Appraising Gender Sensitivity in Textbooks and Examination Questions

The following checklist is not exhaustive and is open to adaptation to suit the analysis of any text.

Summary indicators

- Frequency and nature/manner of appearance of characters by gender;
- Named and unnamed characters, individualized or grouped;
- Work/employment images;
- Sociopolitical images-ownership, buying, investing, giving, sharing, receiving, etc.
- Family roles;
- Psychological traits--courageous, docile, innovative, dynamic, simpleton, authoritative, etc.

Analysis strategies

- Breakdown of characters by gender and number and count frequency of mention;
- Listing of number of females mentioned by name and those nameless;
- Listing of gender-indicated common nouns and classification as female/male adult, female/ male child;
- Order of appearance by gender in terms of page of appearance and placement on page and sentence;
- Listing, categorizing, and counting roles of characters identified by gender;
- Determining centrality of characters by in-depth analysis of relationships and prominence patterns of presentation;
- Counting pictures of female/male adults and children;
- Determining role models for girls as compared with boys;
- Noting method of presentation of characters by gender--order of presentation, autonomy/ dependent, a corollary or complement, respective female/male roles in the home, etc.
- Awareness of language and the way traditionally neutral words are used, e.g., man, people, traders, farmers, and how pronouns are used, e.g., the farmer and her cows.

Proposals for improving accuracy of gender roles including affirmative portrayal to counter/redress current imbalances

- Increase use of neutral pronouns;
- Deliberate allocation of positive roles for women and girls and increased reference to girls and women with due regard to first appearance, order of presentation, and centrality of character;
- Increase in the number of named female characters and in the use of feminine descriptions-head-mistress, businesswomen, etc., as appropriate

- Deliberate care in presentation of relationships between characters--balancing the role of dependency, authority, and autonomy by gender;
- Increased portrayal of women and girls in economic and political roles;
- Deliberate increase of female role models, with particular reference to female participation and achievement in science and technology, agriculture, professions, and in leadership roles;
- Greater emphasis on female intellectual and professional capacities;
- Depiction of males in family-related capacities and increased depiction of sharing of domestic roles.

(from Sigurdsson, Sverrir and Eluned Schweitzer, 1994. "The Use of Sectoral and Project Performance Indicators in Bank-Financed Education Operations: A First Edition Note." Washington DC: World Bank Education and Social Policy Department)

Appendix 4: Strategies for Addressing Problems in Girls' Participation in Education

What are some strategies for addressing the community's education problems? Here are some, grouped in several ways, depending on the problem they address (access, attainment, or achievement) or the level at which the problem is likely to occur (national level, institutional, sociocultural, or local community). The computer tool *Planning for Community Participation in Education* (Wolf, Kane and Strickland, USAID 1997) presents many examples of strategies that have been used in local communities. The computer tool *From Information to Action: Tools for Community Improving Participation in Education* (Kane and Wolf, 2000) shows how to assess problems and identify appropriate strategies.

Strategies for Improving Access, Attainment, Achievement, and Accomplishment

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Helps to Improve...</i>			
	Access	Attainment	Achievement	Accomplishment
involve parents in school	✓	✓	✓	
support positive policy and public expenditure program	✓	✓	✓	
improve data collection and school mapping, and relate findings to policy	✓	✓	✓	
increase number of places or schools, especially in rural areas	✓			
increase number of school places at higher levels		✓	✓	✓
provide access to boys' school where girls or mixed sex schools are not available	✓			
remove factors that restrict attendance such as age limits, timetables, schedules that conflict with children's work, or expulsion for pregnancy	✓	✓	✓	
make enrollment more flexible; lower enrollment age	✓			
expand and upgrade religious schools to attract children whose parents are concerned for their cultural or religious well-being and/or for girls' security	✓	✓	✓	
introduce multiple shifts so that children can attend at times compatible with work or security	✓	✓	✓	
introduce feeder and satellite schools so that the full cycle is available and parents see that enrollment can lead to the full cycle of education	✓	✓	✓	
reduce distance and increase number to improve placement of rural schools and accommodate children's work responsibilities (reducing travel time) and fears for children's security	✓	✓	✓	
place schools in culturally-acceptable locations, especially important for older girls	✓	✓	✓	
provide boundary walls and separate latrines for girls in some cultures	✓	✓	✓	
introduce culturally-relevant, gender-sensitive curriculum, learning materials, and		✓	✓	

classroom management to make schooling more relevant				
identify culturally acceptable educated role models	✓	✓	✓	✓
provide family planning/family life education		✓	✓	
provide nonformal/alternative forms of education	✓	✓	✓	
make school timetable flexible	✓	✓	✓	
train more teachers or more female teachers	✓	✓	✓	
alleviate poverty	✓	✓	✓	
reduce direct costs	✓	✓	✓	
provide school feeding programs	✓	✓	✓	
provide scholarships, bursars, or waive fees	✓	✓	✓	
subsidize uniforms	✓	✓	✓	
factor hidden or indirect costs into educational planning	✓	✓	✓	
provide school transport	✓	✓	✓	
subsidize school materials	✓	✓	✓	
improve home technologies	✓	✓	✓	
work toward improved division of labor by sex	✓	✓	✓	✓
provide day care	✓	✓	✓	✓
improve adult income	✓	✓	✓	
establish enforceable child labor restrictions	✓	✓	✓	
remove policies, regulations, or practices that prevent or work against women receiving certain kinds or levels of education				✓
make science and mathematics textbooks and learning materials more relevant to girls				✓
remove restrictive labor legislation				✓
insure equal remuneration				✓
support equal promotion possibilities				✓
Control sexual harassment				✓

Access: the decision to enter children into school. This is often referred to as enrollment.

Attainment: the lengths of time children remain in school and the level of education to which they progress.

Achievement: how well children perform in school.

Accomplishment: children's success once they leave school.

Some strategies to increase enrollment in rural, deprived areas and among indigenous people:

- improving quality of teaching and curriculum;
- bilingual education for indigenous students;
- advocacy for girls' education;
- community participation;
- child care/bringing younger siblings to school;
- decrease school distance.

Another way of looking at strategies is to consider the level at which the problem arises:

Some strategies at the national level:

- create a favorable environment for community participation and local educational systems through policy review;
- create and support commitment to empowering local and disadvantaged people;
- establish enforceable child labor restrictions;
- improve legal status of women and ethnic and language minorities;
- improve data collection to relate to policy;
- invest in necessary infrastructure such as schools, water, toilets, and furniture;
- launch information campaigns;
- adopt poverty-alleviating strategies that release children from the tasks of water and fuel collection for more productive activities;
- improve local people's access to the formal labor market;
- devise policy on schoolgirl pregnancy;
- encourage promotion of female educators and training of staff.

Some strategies at the school level:

Enrollment and promotion

- lower the enrollment age;
- review repetition and expulsion policies;
- provide access to boys' schools where girls' or mixed-sex schools are not available;
- expand and upgrade religious schools to attract children whose parents are concerned for their cultural or religious well-being and/or security.

Calendar and security management

- introduce flexible hours;
- provide child care facilities.

Curricula, materials, and methods

- introduce culturally-appropriate and gender-sensitive curriculum, learning materials, and classroom management to make schooling more relevant;
- establish science laboratories and school libraries;
- institute tutoring and mentoring programs;
- promote cultural/gender sensitivity training in all pre- and in-service training courses.

Some strategies at the local community/household level:

High direct cost of schooling

- lower the cost of school materials;
- provide transportation and uniforms;
- introduce fee waivers, school lunches, health programs such as deworming;
- factor hidden/indirect costs into educational planning;
- improve adult income;
- alleviate poverty.

High opportunity costs of schooling

- adjust the school calendar to accommodate household child labor requirements;
- reduce the distance between school and home;
- use satellite schools;
- provide child care and pre-school facilities;
- promote labor-saving technologies;
- introduce multiple shifts so that children can attend at times compatible with work and security;
- improve home technologies.

Low private economic returns to education

- improve the legal and regulatory systems to enhance the status of women, cultural and linguistic minorities;
- make educational curricula more responsive and relevant to livelihood and market demand.

Physical and cultural security

- increase community participation in schools;
- construct culturally appropriate facilities;
- increase number and improve placement of rural schools since parents are less likely to send girls, younger children and children with work responsibilities to distant schools;
- provide dormitories, boundary walls, and separate latrines;
- reduce distance to school;
- make transportation available;
- use religious schools;
- promote more female teachers.

Low demand for education

- launch information campaigns;
- promote adult literacy programs;
- introduce feeder and satellite schools to demonstrate that enrollment can eventually lead to a full cycle of education;
- identify culturally acceptable educated role models.

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Organizations Visited

Ministry of Education: Mr. Iskender Iskenderov, Deputy Minister

Ministry of Education: Mr. Arif Muradov, Head, Division of General and Pre-school Education

Cabinet of Ministers, Department of Science, Culture and Education: Dr. Rena Ibrahimbekova, Deputy Head

State Statistics Committee: Mr. Rza Allahverdiyev, Survey Director, Head, Department of Demography

State Statistics Committee: Ms. Svetlana Antyukhina, Head, Humanitarian and Moral Statistics Department

State Statistics Committee: Ms. Irina Timayeva, Department of Social Issues

State Committee on Women: Mrs. Zahra Tahigizi Guliyeva, Chairperson; Professor Mominat Domarova, Vice Chairperson

School No. 14: Director, Ms. Sevinj Badagova

UNIFEM: Ms. Patricia McPhillips, Chief Technical Advisor

HAYAT: Mr. Fuad Mamedov

Attendees at the Girls' Education/Participatory Learning and Action Workshop, September 6, 2001: *

Ms. Irina Timayeva, Department of Social Issues, State Statistics Committee

Ms. Vafa Efendiyeva, UNIFEM

Mr. Fuad Mamedov, HAYAT

Mr. Arif Muradov, Head, Basic Education, Ministry of Education

Professor Mominat Omarova, Vice Chairperson, State Committee on Women

Ms. Jamilya Shahverdiyeva, HAYAT

Ms. Matanat Ragimova, UNICEF Ms. Dilara Babayeva, UNICEF