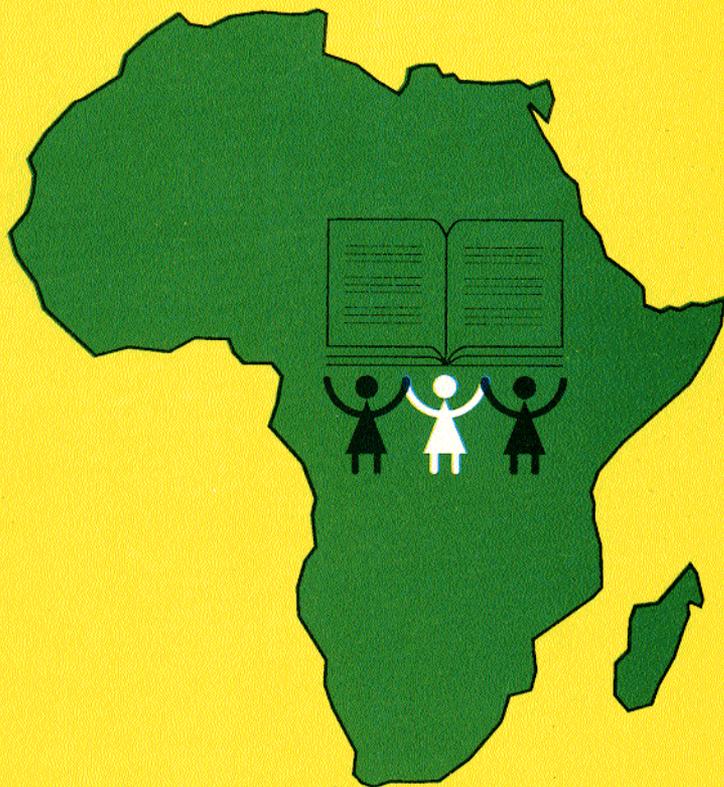




# THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS THE OUAGADOUGOU DECLARATION AND FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION



PAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS

Organized under UNESCO'S Priority Africa Programme  
and the UNESCO/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education  
in cooperation with the Government of Burkina Faso

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso  
28 March - 1 April 1993

# PREFACE

The millions of girls out of primary schools in Africa is concrete evidence of the shortcomings in our efforts to establish national education systems as well as an indication of the distance between the present situation and achieving education for all targets. As we approach the twenty-first century, marking nearly forty years of independence for many African countries, the priority is to redress this situation, allowing women to take their rightful place in the social and economic development of the region.

The Pan-African Conference on the Education of Girls held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 28 March to 1 April, was a catalyst for action to be taken on a national scale and in the African region as a whole. Countries have undertaken innovations and pilot projects, but not on the scale required to reach the millions of out-of-school girls. It is now time for national planners to give priority to girls education through defined targets, adequate budgetary allocations, appropriate strategies and monitoring mechanisms.

The Ouagadougou Declaration and Framework for Action are the outcome of the speeches, presentations and the various conference documents. It is intended to inform countries and agencies of those areas for development which were given high priority during the Conference. It is recognized, however, that each country must identify its own priorities in the context of the education of girls.

Although the document discusses only those issues which attracted maximum dialogue among conference participants, the general concerns are reflected in the framework for action. Countries will need to assess their own socio-cultural and, economic situation in determining effective strategies for girls education. Nevertheless, the document highlights some country experiences and other countries may learn more about them through horizontal co-operation.

The magnitude of the challenge underscores the need for national commitment and for recognition of girls' education as a public responsibility. There will be need to establish a harmonious relationship between education, culture and religion, allowing for the education of girls in a context which will optimize the benefits to them and to the nation as a whole.

The scheduling of activities implies immediate action at country level. There are some actions which do not require financing. It is expected that by the time countries receive this document, those which were represented at the Conference would have already initiated such activities in the spirit of the Ouagadougou Declaration. The idea of having a Joint working group comprising representatives of governments, agencies, nongovernmental organizations and the business community is to reduce the lag time between resources and planning and operations. Recognizing the importance and

impact of pressure groups, the wives of politicians are called upon to become national advocates for the improvement in the education and welfare of girls.

It is vital for the individual countries and for UNESCO, UNICEF and other agencies to know the rate of progress in achieving girls' education targets. Hence monitoring and evaluation are integral parts of the strategies to achieve girls education. To this end, progress at national and regional levels will be assessed in the context of achieving education for all (EFA) goals.

Considering that women constitute half of the world's population, today more than ever, it is evident that without educating girls and women sustainable development will not be achieved.

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# SUMMARY

## THE PAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS (OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINAFASO, 28 MARCH TO 1 APRIL, 1993)

The Pan-African Conference on the Education of Girls marked another milestone in regional efforts to make education for all a reality in terms of quality, access and management. The Conference was organized jointly by the Government of Burkina Faso and UNESCO under its Priority Africa Programme and within the framework of the UNESCO/UNICEF Joint Committee for Education, with the overall support of UNICEF. Other agencies contributed in terms of sponsoring resource persons and providing background materials. Among such agencies were the Rockefeller Foundation, UNFPA, USAID Project ABEL, World Bank and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Forty-one African countries were represented at the level of ministers of education, vice ministers, permanent secretaries and directors; fifteen governmental and non-governmental organizations, including Rotary International, also attended. The total number of participants was about 200. The level of participation from the African countries would not have been so high without the support of the permanent delegations, and the UNESCO and UNICEF field offices. The Conference was officially opened on 29 March, 1993, by the President of Burkina Faso, His Excellency, Mr. Blaise Compaore and closed by the Hon. Prime Minister on 1 April, 1993. It was chaired by Mrs. Alice Tiendrebeogo, Hon. the Minister of Education, Burkina Faso, supported by two vice-chairpersons, the Hon. Kate Kainja, Minister of Education, Malawi, and the Hon. Mr. A.Basit Salih Sabdarat, Minister of Education, Sudan.

The main objectives of the Conference were to get regional consensus on girls education as a priority for education development in Africa; identify priority areas for a regional framework for action and for national programmes and plans to improve girls opportunities for education; and consider strategies for resource mobilization at the national level, giving special attention to new partnerships, thus allowing for sustained improvements .

The presentations of the resource persons were well thought out and stimulated much discussions. The Assistant Director General for Education, UNESCO, Mr. Colin Power, presented the technical overview and the Regional Director of West and Central African Region, UNICEF, Mr. Stanislas Adotevi presented the regional perspective. Both of the presentations set the stage for the Conference and to a large extent determined its success.

Among the areas which attracted interesting dialogue were: **Non-formal education** as a strategy for improving girls' opportunities in education; improving the **national policy environment** to support girls' education with special emphasis on rural development; using the **local culture as an omnibus** for improving the teaching and learning process; making the **girl-child the centre-piece for educational planning** in an effort to build a 'girl friend-

ly' school environment; and introducing more **empirical research** in determining factors affecting the education of girls in order to better inform planners of the key areas for investment

The Conference adopted the Ouagadougou Declaration which calls upon governments, international and bilateral agencies, nongovernmental organizations and politicians to establish the education of girls as a priority to set targets, to provide appropriate levels of resources, to monitor the progress on a biennial basis and to report to the International Forum on Education for All (EFA).

The end of the Conference marks the beginning of the challenge - THE FOLLOW-UP!

The UNESCO secretariat has already conducted in-house discussions on the follow-up activities to the Conference and especially on the collaboration with other agencies which have expressed their interest in such activities.

UNESCO takes this opportunity to express its sincere appreciation to the delegations, who through numerous channels of communication, ensured that the right persons represented their countries and the interest of their future generations of women. Having provided the necessary support in making the Conference a success, it is expected that they will extend their assistance to UNESCO in convincing Member States to give priority to translating the Ouagadougou Declaration into action.

# THE OUAGADOUGOU DECLARATION

Recognizing that:

- there are 26 million African girls out of school, most of them in rural areas, and estimates show that this figure will increase to 36 million by the year 2000;
- Africa is lagging behind other regions of the world in female enrolment ratios and female literacy;
- illiteracy rates are over 60 per cent for women;
- the rapid population growth-rate has inhibited efforts to eliminate the disparity between boys and girls in the education system;
- there is need to abolish prevailing national policies which are not conducive to the enhancement of girls' education and the status of women.

Considering that girls' education contributes to improved quality of life and enhances national development through:

- increased economic production rates;
- improved hygiene and nutritional practices;
- reduced child and maternal mortality rate;

Noting that the

- World Conference on Education for All emphasized that its most urgent priority is to ensure access to and improve the quality of education for girls
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) established universal access to primary education with special emphasis on girls, as a goal for children development in the 1990s;
- World Summit for Children asserted that efforts for the enhancement of women's status and their role in development must begin with the girl-child;

- Sixth Conference of Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning in African Member States (MINEDAF VI, Dakar, 1991) emphasized the need for priority to be given to children of school-age and vulnerable groups, particularly girls and illiterate women.

This Conference calls upon

- Governments to undertake analytic assessment of the social and educational situation of girls and women with the active participation of women's organizations and other non-governmental organizations, political and traditional leaders and representatives of various population groups with special emphasis on the co-operate bodies;
- Governments to give priority to quality and equity and administration targets for improving girls' education within the framework of national development plans;
- Governments of those countries in which the disparity between boys and girls in school is more than 10 per cent of the target population to eliminate such disparities by the year 2000;
- Governments to prepare and implement strategies to achieve such targets making the girl-child the focus of education planning and development;
- Governments and in particular the ministries of education to ensure that, by 1995, all teachers have received training on gender issues and that such issues be incorporated in the conventional teacher training programme and the school curriculum;
- Governments introduce and reinforce regulations which will eliminate the employment of school-age girls as household help without opportunities for education;
- Governments to monitor the progress in their achievement and by 1995 to make the first progress report to the nation, the sub-region and the region, and in the global context to report progress to the International Forum on Education for All and United Nations World Conference on Women in 1995, and thereafter to present biennial reports;
- regional, bilateral and international agencies and nongovernmental organizations, to make the education of girls the number one priority in their development programmes and also to give priority to the development of rural water, roads and electricity which will ease the workload of the mother and hence the girl-child;

- spouses of heads of states, ministers and parliamentarians to form a pressure group for ensuring the education and welfare of the girl-child;
- educators to draw on the positive aspects of historical, cultural, and religious heritage as a means of improving education quality and equity;
- the Organization of African Unity to give priority to the education of the girl-child in the agenda of its upcoming OAU meeting in Cairo and further to take affirmative action in reducing the disparity between education of boys and girls as a follow-up to the Dakar consensus with special reference to the target to eliminate these disparities by the year 2000;
- the United Nations in its agenda for the upcoming World Conference on Women to put girls' education on the agenda and to include a round table on girls' education;
- governments and the international community to recognize and make reference to this declaration, as of today, as the Ouagadougou Declaration.

Adopted this first day of April, 1993

The Conference

# BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

«The most urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of education for girls and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their participation. All gender stereotyping in education should be eliminated» (World Declaration on Education for All, Article 3)

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## BACKGROUND

For over two decades, the world has turned its attention to the status and education of women, and most recently to the imbalances in male and female opportunities for education.

The Pan-African Conference on the Education of Girls, marked another milestone in meeting the challenge of achieving education for all in real terms. It reinforced the conclusion of the Jomtien Conference which stressed as its most urgent priority to insure access and improve the quality of education of girls; the call of the 42nd session of the International Conference on Education (1990) for the elimination of all gender stereotyping in education, the Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989) which established Universal access to primary education, with special emphasis on girls as a goal for Development in the 1990s; the World Summit for Children (New York, 1990) which underlines the education of the girl child as the nucleus for enhancing women's status and their role in development; the Sixth Conference of Ministers of Education and those Responsible for Economic Planning in African Member States (MINEDAE VI, Dakar, 1991); and the International Conference on Assistance to African Children (ICAAC) which identified the need for quantitative goals, especially to reduce the disparity between boys and girls by at least one-third by 1995.

Why then the Pan African Conference on the Education of Girls? Its key objective was to get the consensus of the African decisionmakers, on the education of girls and on a scale which would attract appropriate action at the national level. The problem of girls' opportunities for education looms large as we approach the twenty-first century. In the African region, there are about 26 million girls out of school as well as many who attend school but achieve very little success in the school system. Of forty-six African countries reviewed, forty-two have female gross enrolment ratios lower than that of boys. In Mali, Niger, Guinea and Sierra Leone, female enrolment ratios are 17, 21, 24 and 39 per cent respectively. In sub-Saharan Africa, the estimated illiteracy rate (1990) is 41 per cent for men and 64 per cent for women. These global figures shroud female illiteracy rates as exist in Burkina Faso (82 per cent), Sierra Leone (79 per cent), Benin (77 per cent), Ethiopia (77 per cent) and

Guinea(76 per cent). In the Arab states, the female illiteracy rate (1990) was estimated at 62 per cent.

Compared with other regions, Africa is lagging behind in eradicating illiteracy. In east Asia/Oceania the average illiteracy rate is 33.6 per cent; in Latin America and the Caribbean, 17 per cent; and in the European countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2.6 per cent. A question which one must ask and underline is 'Can a region achieve sustainable human development when about 40 per cent of its population has not got the minimum education needed to understand, transmit to its offspring and to participate in appropriate national socio-economic policies and measures concerning such areas as population control, resource acquisition and allocation, scientific and technological development, and productivity?'

Against the foregoing background, the Conference was a springboard for regional as well as country-specific action. Invitations were extended to fifty-one African states, forty-nine responded, indicating their representatives, and forty-one countries were represented by the level of Hon. Ministers of Education, Vice- Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, Directors and Deputy Directors. Representatives from fourteen agencies attended, bringing the total participation, including local invitees to about 200. By virtue of its coverage, the Conference lent itself not only to regional awareness-building but also to exploring the practicality of new or under-implemented technical approaches under the guidance of experts drawn from various African countries.

The objectives of the Conference were to identify:

- a) policies and strategies for attracting and retaining millions of girls in the education system, using sectoral and multisectoral approaches;
- b) monitoring and reporting on strategies for determining progress made in girls' education;
- c) strategies for mobilizing resources nationally, giving special consideration to new partnerships (particularly private sector involvement), and regionally from multilateral and bilateral sources;
- d) regional and international policies which would release resources and create a conducive environment for the education of girls; and
- e) priorities for a regional action programme framework which responds to the multiplicity of obstacles to girls' education and within which decision-makers can develop appropriate and effective action programmes.

To ensure that the participants addressed the main purpose of the Conference, they were provided with detailed guidelines for the discussions in working groups and were assisted by resource persons. Key presentations were made in the plenary sessions.

For the most part, participants were in agreement on the issues concerning girls' education and were keen on sharing the experiences of others who in various ways had attempted to address some issues. It was clear that in redressing the situation of women, the approach would need to revolve around four axes: the «commitment to act», «knowing how to act», «being able to act», and the «act itself». Advocacy and national commitment must be reflected in all aspects of national life, including political, social, religious and business and commerce. Countries will need to build capacity and mobilize resources, both internally and externally, to ensure the sustained advancement of women.

There were, however, some aspects of girls' education which attracted considerable dialogue among participants. Among these areas were policy, research and information networking; quality of education and achievement; access to education - formal and nonformal provision; and education planning, administration and management.

### **Policy, research and information networking**

That all children regardless of sex have the right to education is explicit in the education policies of most countries. In this context, consideration should be given to the ability of the girlchild to exercise that right. The support and recognition given to women in the national, regional and international environment is probably the most direct contributor to the education and advancement of girls. The presence of role models helps girls to define their aspirations and pursue or create opportunities. Unfortunately, too many countries provide little support for women through the general policy environment and thus foster negative aspects of cultural traditions. Even in the international environment, too few women are visible as representatives and consultants.

Policies need to be considered in a multi-sectoral framework, allowing for the natural interaction of the contributing factors. A national climate which favours the education of girls would inter alia give women the right to vote and ensure that they are not disadvantaged by laws and regulations relating to inheritance, landownership, marital ties, and access to credit and employment at all levels, with special emphasis on the decision-making level. Women's limited access to employment in the formal labour market has in fact restricted their income and kept the private returns to their education low.

Rural development programmes have been in some respects successful, but for the most part their progress in improving the quality of life and the economic situation of rural people has been far from desirable. Fetching water and carrying wood are neverending life chores for rural women. Even piped water in rural areas is not potable. In search for a better life, rural men

leave their women and children behind, breaking down the family structure. Women must assume new roles and responsibilities which in turn results in additional dependence on school-age girls to assist them with the day-to-day chores.

Policy and targets need to be informed. Research studies targeting women have helped to improve understanding of sociocultural, economic and political forces which have historically given shape, form and direction to the situation of women and their comparative status vis-a-vis males. Research has exposed the many positive relationships between the education of women and the quality of life. Although consensus has been reached on the need to promote girls' education, develop gender-sensitive policies and reorientate existing policies where necessary, there is a pool of unanswered questions. Further research is needed to better inform planners of the areas for priority investment.

Much of the research undertaken on African women has been carried out by expatriates or men. Female African scholars have been limited in numbers, and sometimes in research methods and skills. Any attempt to pursue additional research should give consideration to building a critical mass of highly skilled female researchers.

The products of the research are generally not widely disseminated by information networks and hence knowledge is not readily available to African scholars, planners and policy-makers. To reduce the time lag and to improve understanding and acceptability between the researcher and the policy-makers and planners, research needs to be undertaken jointly by them. National and regional information networks need to be strengthened and the media attracted to disseminating information on girls' education.

### **Educational quality and achievement**

Good classroom teaching is an imperative for achievement by both boys and girls, but moreso for girls who have little or no learning time outside school. There is need to continue to explore various approaches which will enhance the teaching and learning environment bringing education in harmony with the local context and at the same time giving it the props for further development.

Intricately intertwined into the quality of education is access to schooling and retention of girls. In this respect the potential of the school curriculum in attracting and retaining girls has not been given the attention which it deserves. Its starting point was an adaptation of western curricula and bore little relevance to the lifestyle of the children. Hence in learning English, African children were taught 'Rain, rain, go away come again another day', despite the fact that in the African context, rain brings jubilation because it signifies, planting, harvesting and food. The rain songs were not translated into English. The crafts, festivals, dances and music were not made a part of

the curriculum. The African child's understanding of his or her environment, his or her way of classifying things, of constructing knowledge and of relating to peers and adults were not incorporated into the primary education curriculum. In giving insufficient consideration to the value systems and experiences of the child in the organization and structure of the curriculum, the school denies the child those constructs which form the building blocks of his or her learning and self-identity.

Traditionally children were educated by their parents, community leaders and their peers. In this context, the onus to learn was left to the learners, with sanctions for those who did not learn. The traditional curriculum was derived from the needs for survival. In general, it included **inter alia**: religious and spiritual beliefs, values and morals; appropriate social relationships with various members of the community; modes of behaviour which were acceptable to the community; sex education; skills for the acquisition and preparation of food, military security and indigenous craft. It also had a delivery mechanism. Learning was acquired through participation in community and family events; listening, reciting and play; undertaking specific tasks and imitating adults; formal instruction in small groups, large groups or single-sex groups; and admonition and punishment for those who did not conform. This «education programme» gave the learner a sense of belonging, of self and of achievement.

There were undoubtedly negative aspects to the cultural patterns, foremost among them was female circumcision. In recent years some attempts have been made to «Africanize» the curriculum by introducing culturally related stories, African history, science and geography. This initiative needs to be taken further in terms of studying and understanding the ways in which the African child interprets and constructs knowledge from his environment, working with traditional leaders in identifying the content of the traditional education which can become the omnibus for learning, particularly at the primary level and using this information to make learning a more pleasurable and satisfying experience for the child. Areas such as sex education need to fit into a cultural context. Indigenous craft training and production, songs, local music and dance can contribute towards giving the child a sense of belonging to an environment and a desire to attend school.

Why is it important to establish this link between the school and the traditional forms of education? On the one hand, there is the direct benefit to the child, and the other hand, as communities modernize and adults are more involved with income-generating activities, the community structure breaks down, carrying with it the communal care and education of the child. This is being evidenced in parts of Africa where there is a growing social group called 'street children'. A few years ago, this was unheard of as the child belonged to a family and a community. Now there are children without an 'anchor' and this requires the school to take greater responsibility for ensuring the development of the future generation, particularly through the education of girls. As the 'street children' increase in numbers, girls are at risk of being drawn into prostitution.

## **Science and mathematics education**

Research findings have shown that there are thirty females in every hundred students in Africa, even in disciplines in which women are usually dominant in other parts of the world. In agriculture and forestry, only one out of every five students is female and females account for less than 30 per cent in other science-related areas.

Negative attitudes and disillusionment of girls regarding science and mathematics education can be traced to their early contact with these subjects at primary level. Primary science teaching, divorced as it is from the environment, tends to be uninspiring and conceptually weak. Hence it destroys the natural curiosity and the desire of children to know. Both boys and girls are turned off at an early age but the effect is strongest with girls who have already been conditioned by society to think that science education is for boys. This perception is oftentimes reinforced by the teachers' attitudes towards girls.

Science and mathematics teaching must help to remove the self-censure and cognitive self-discrimination. These subjects should be more closely related to the interest of girls and should offer an early learning environment which allows for concept building and the development of positive attitudes through enjoyable experiences.

### **The Role of the teacher**

The relationship between the girl-child and the teacher can reinforce the traditional female stereotype or help the girl-child to develop a new concept of herself. Although many teachertraining programmes include the 'pygmalion concept', not enough is done to highlight the impact of teacher behaviour on perpetuating gender stereotypes. Consideration is now being given to sensitizing teachers, through in-service and pre-service programmes, in identifying and defining patterns of relationships which will enhance the girl's concept of herself.

In terms of promoting success, the teacher should be made aware of the limited learning time the girl has, the burden of household chores which she is expected to carry out and the contextual situation in which her achievement improves. Opportunities for remediation need special emphasis, particularly for irregular attenders. However, in this respect teachers would need appropriate training and adequate supplies of learning materials.

### **Formal and non-formal education**

There has been no doubt in the mind of any one that the formal system has failed to reach millions of school age children, particularly girls in remote rural areas. Simultaneously, there are religious groups and non-governmental organizations which have been able to reach these groups through non-formal education programmes.

But even among these groups, wide-scale implementation of their school structure would probably meet with less success. Some have argued that the non-formal approach should be only an interim measure which articulates with the formal system and which allows for upward mobility of the girl-child. Others have proposed nonformal education as an end in itself.

In respect of primary-school-age children, the consensus is towards making the primary school more efficient and adaptable to meeting the needs of girls in various situations. In the meantime non-formal structures which articulate with the formal system can be established, bearing in mind that the concern is to give girls the opportunity for upward mobility.

### **Educational planning, administration and management**

Making the girl-child the centre of education planning, administration and management would help to make the physical as well as the pedagogical environment more responsive to her needs and would in no way disadvantage the boys. In this structure consideration would be given to the appropriate proportion of female teachers, sanitary facilities, security for the girls, curriculum methodology (particularly in respect of family life and sex education), welfare support and single-sex schools. Educational plans should identify appropriate indicators for girls' education and determine quantitative targets to be achieved within a given timeframe.

### **The role of the community**

In the development of education, rural communities have had limited involvement in its planning, administration and delivery to their children. Community involvement has been encouraged primarily in the establishment of «low-cost schools» and to some extent school management, but less so in the context of education content and delivery. Greater participation of community representatives in identifying curriculum content and delivery methodology could contribute towards making such areas as sex education, nutrition and sanitation, technology and crafts more relevant to the local situation and in turn more beneficial in improving the quality of life of the communities.

### **Resource mobilization and partnerships**

The education of all children of primary-school age is a public responsibility. Implications are that an appropriate level of public funds must be allocated to education to ensure that all children in a country have access to primary education as a fundamental right. This is the ultimate objective.

As governments progress towards this target, they need to mobilize all internal resources to ensure sustainability of education development for each move forward. Religious bodies and non-governmental organizations have been traditional partners in the provision of education. These partnerships

can be strengthened and new partnerships explored, particularly among the business community, not only as a source of financial aid but also as a source of ideas for planning and innovation.

### **Monitoring girls' education**

Monitoring, evaluation and subsequent reform will contribute towards the broadened vision and dynamism needed for achieving girls' education targets. Although there have been pockets of success, on a large scale governments have not been able to assess the effectiveness of their inputs and have not yet identified the factor or combination of factors which will attract and retain girls in school. Implications are that as governments progress towards their targets, they will need to change directions, and possibly policies and strategies. Hence monitoring will be a critical tool for achieving success.

### **External agency involvement and support**

Recognizing that governments are responsible for the education of the nation's children, the external agency would be expected to assist them in: (a) providing the human and financial support for catalytic action, (b) facilitating the exchange of experiences, (c) assisting institutional strengthening, including capacity building, (d) strengthening the monitoring process at all levels, (e) keeping the education of girls high on the agenda.

### **THE FOLLOW-UP ACTION SCHEDULE FOR IMPROVING GIRLS EDUCATION**

The proposed follow-up action schedule does not presume that countries have not been making efforts to improve the education and welfare of girls. It is expected that they will consolidate their existing activities and determine the direction for new emphasis and development. The schedule indicates parameters within which countries are able to develop their specific action schedule based on the realities of the local situation.

The country working team may be established in its own right or under the umbrella of an existing national council for education or task force to which it reports. Because of the high priority given to girls' education on the national and international agenda, it would be appropriate that the working team be chaired by the Hon. Minister of Education or his or her designate at decision-making level.

It is not expected that countries will establish parallel structures to address the issues of girls' education but rather that they will strengthen the existing structures so that they will function effectively in improving girls' education. However, staff must be identified in both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of National Planning to undertake the day-to-day follow-up of girls' education activities.

The list of areas to be monitored is provided to assist the working team in determining its own monitoring indicators. While each country will determine its own realistic schedule, it will be beneficial to the girls if countries work as closely as possible within the following time schedule:

1. Establish a joint country working team, chaired by the Hon. Minister of Education and comprising representatives (preferably females at decision-making level) of government, bilateral and multilateral agencies, and non-governmental organizations, media, business sector [June 1993]
2. Identifying girls' -education targets and corresponding milestones in the area of access, quality, and administration and management to be monitored in the short-term, medium-term and long-term [June 1993]
3. Identify planning information gaps and the type of research to be undertaken [June 1993]
4. Identify and prepare outlines of the strategies to be pursued in order to achieve the girls' education targets in the given term [June to July 1993]
5. Prepare implementation schedules for all activities to be undertaken within the parameters of the respective strategies [July 1993]
6. Undertake activities directed towards improving girls' education, in the framework of the Ouagadougou Declaration [August 1993 onwards]
7. Establish a monitoring mechanism and set the dates for the first progress report for subsequent reports on girls' education, culminating into the 1995 biennial report to the Education for All Forum [July to August 1993]
8. Identify ways of keeping the education of girls high on the national, regional and international agenda [on-going]
9. Establish pressure groups, primarily for advocacy, of wives of the head of state, ministers and members of parliament [June 1993]

# FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

## I. EDUCATION POLICY, RESEARCH AND NETWORKING

### POLICY

1.1 A range of policy recommendations on girls' education has evolved in recognition of the vital link between female education and national development, and in response to global demands for social justice in terms of women's and girls' rights to education. Policies on education are therefore being reviewed for greater gender sensitivity, reflecting convergence of views on the urgent need to more fully address and support girls' education. Policies regarding girls' education need to be considered in a multi-sectoral perspective - within the framework of the education sector as well as, among others, the health, labour, judicial and commercial sectors.

### Education sector

1.2 It is important that the education sector give priority to:

- re-admission of 'mother-girls' into the formal education system and provision of non-formal educational opportunities for 'mother-girls' who are beyond school age
- social mobilization in support of girls' schooling and third channel initiatives - media and business sector to promote girls' education, particularly targeting girls in difficult circumstances, school-age household helpers for instance
- participation of communities in the provision of education, in terms of identification of educational needs, provision of facilities, and management and administration of schools
- incentives and concessions to teachers in remote areas (such as remote area allowances and housing) lower qualification for girls wishing to enter teacher training-colleges coupled with gradually raising entry requirement as girls' education improves thereby increasing girls' enrolment rate in teacher training colleges to 50 per cent
- promoting science and mathematics programmes for girls by providing appropriately trained teachers, and guidance and counselling support services
- official recognition and support for multiple delivery systems which lead to mainstreaming girls

- making the girl-child the focus of decision-making in educational planning and administration;
- providing free education, scholarships and stipends to girls, particularly from rural areas
- introducing primary education levies on tax payers to make available additional funds for the acquisition of learning materials and for in-service training of teachers
- increasing education budgets to allow greater access of girls to primary education by establishing new school places nearer the communities
- supporting official development assistance policies for increased budgetary allocations to education, information and communication programmes in support of the welfare and development of girls

### **“ Mother-girls ”**

In Jamaica, there are crisis centres which provide the education and guidance needed by young girls who become pregnant during their school years. After the baby is about 6 months old and the centre is assured by the girl that there is someone to take care of the baby, she is allowed to return to school.

It is a practice in Burkina Faso to allow pregnant secondary school girls to remain in school.

### **Incentives to teachers in remote areas**

Incentives to be offered to teachers in remote areas could include: a) housing; b) lower recruitment requirements to allow entry for girls and provide opportunities for improving their education levels; c) accelerated promotions; and d) special scholarships for academic achievement.

## **Why female teachers ?**

The presence of female teachers in schools will enhance girls' enrolment and attendance in areas where parents do not wish to send their girls to male teachers. Female teachers will discourage the molestation of girls by male teachers and provide the girls with a role model.

Efforts to increase the female teaching force have been made | in Yemen through the institution of a voluntary national | service programme which require all girls who complete | secondary school to serve as primary school teachers for one | year. Bangladesh adopted positive discrimination in teacher-training admissions and recruitment to redress the gender imbalances in the teaching force.

## **Free education scholarships and stipends**

Girls' enrolment and retention in school have been successfully improved through free education in Ghana, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Tunisia. China provides boarding scholarships for girls in rural and remote areas. In Bangladesh, girls enrolment and retention have been increased through a programme offering them stipends and scholarships.

## **Non-education sector policies**

1.3 The non-education sectors can strengthen the efforts of the education sector. They need to:

- support official development assistance to give priority to rural development programmes through increased budgetary allocations, defined targets and monitoring of achievements
- establish quotas for increasing the number of women in decision-making positions in all fields progressing gradually towards 50 per cent females and 50 per cent males
- establish quotas to increase women's employment opportunities in the formal sector with levels of remuneration comparable to their male counterparts
- undertake legislation reform to enhance girls' access to and retention in school (for instance raising first-marriage age and sanctions against withdrawal of girls from school)
- introduce and strengthen information policies aimed at promoting a positive image of women and girls in the mass media and an awareness campaign in favour of women's status

- introduce and enforce policies which will enhance the status of women - access to credit, landownership, equal rights in marital ties, etc.

1.4 At the international level, policies should require conditionalities for loans and grants to countries to include the development of gender-focused plans and programmes.

## **RESEARCH**

### **Institutionalization of research**

1.5 The inadequacy of the data base on girls' education suggests the need to create and strengthen research units within established (tertiary) institutions and government ministries, at national level. Information-sharing should be promoted through the establishment of research groups in which women, at all levels, can play an active role in conducting research on girls' education. There is need to:

- establish at national level documentation centres to facilitate access to data and stimulate further research; a central co-ordinating unit for educational research, preferably within the Planning Ministry so that the results of policy and action-oriented research will be more easily integrated into national development plans and programmes.
- set up or strengthen similar co-ordinating structures and documentation centers at regional and subregional levels.

### **Indicators**

- develop appropriate indicators for data analysis, goal quantification, comparative evaluations and overall monitoring of girls' education.

### **Dissemination of research results**

- establish mechanisms to provide wide-scale dissemination of research findings and evaluation on education to the various categories of end users, notably teachers and other educational practitioners, policy-makers, families and communities, in a comprehensible manner and using a variety of media forms (such as written reports, radio and television programmes, workshops, conferences and seminars, popular theatre, etc.). Community languages should

be used, where practical and relevant, to disseminate research results. Teachers, being the ultimate implements of research results as translated into curricula and programmes, should be made increasingly aware of the research process, products and outcomes, in order to enrich their knowledge about the complex range of issues related to girls' education and enhance their capacity and performance.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

1.6 Quantitative as well as qualitative research methods are essential for data complementary. Emphasis should be given to:

- the participatory approach in order to fully understand basic community needs specifically as regards girls' education
- action-oriented research directed at problem-solving and overall development
- studies that can be replicated, using uniform methods, approaches and indicators, to allow for comparability of research data across countries, and within the subregion and the region as a whole

## **PRIORITY RESEARCH AREAS**

1.7 Given that various studies have already been undertaken on the education of girls, new research should build on existing findings, seeking to clarify them, and generate additional knowledge. In this context, priority research areas would relate to:

- traditional education and cultural practices that benefit the girls in the community (including patterns of socialization into adulthood) and elements of these that can be provided in the school system
- quantitative analysis of 'free education' in terms of attracting and retaining girls at the primary level linked to the advantages of improved efficiency in the school system
- implications for the education system (with special emphasis on girls' education in respect of quality, access and costs) of recommended strategies such as flexible school year, decentralized management, decentralized curriculum development and small village schools
- identification of appropriate curriculum content to meet the needs and aspirations of rural and urban dwellers, particularly girls

- social and cognitive benefits for girls in different school types and organization- multiple shifts, multigrade classes, single sex schools, co-educational schools, boarding schools
- issues of educational costs : direct costs, hidden costs and opportunity costs
- school mapping and action-research into the feasibility of establishing cluster and satellite schools to improve girls access education
- social perceptions of the role of women and the impact of them on teacher-pupil interaction patterns, from a gender perspective, and how this impact can be mitigated through appropriate teacher education and school supervision
- rehabilitation of girl drop-outs in formal and non-formal education programmes : the various methods and approaches
- preparation of a global history of the role played by african women in development
- time-budget studies on the domestic tasks of girls and other labour.

## **INFORMATION NETWORKING**

1.8 Information networking involves the sharing of relevant knowledge, experience, strategies and materials. Meaningful and sustained progress in the education of girls can be accelerated through the establishment of reliable channels and networks for such exchange among countries, institutions and individuals. It calls for urgent action in the identification of existing networks and their strengthening for increased efficiency of information sharing and dissemination.

- a) At the international level, both UNESCO and UNICEF will provide or strengthen global structures for sharing information and experience on issues relating to girls education.

The Donors to African Education (DAE) Working Group on Female Participation will continue to give priority to research and information networking.

- b) At the regional level, both UNESCO and UNICEF will continue to provide useful sources of information on girls education and their resources will become more accessible to those seeking such information.

The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) provides for a reliable regional exchange mechanism for information and experience sharing through its quarterly newsletter FEMNET NEWS and through collaborative activities with other non-governmental organizations involved in women's development.

The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) will provide information on innovations and successful experimentation in girls' education.

The Network of Educational Innovation for Development in Africa (NEIDA), the Education for All Network for Eastern and Southern Africa (EFANESA), the Education Research Network for Eastern and Southern Africa (ERNESA), the African Academy of Sciences and the Association of African Women in Research and Development (AAWORD), among others, can contribute useful information exchange and networking. The union des radios et televisiones nationales africaines (URTNA) and other media organizations have an important role to play in audio-visual material exchange

c) Networks at the national level include educational and research organizations, and women's associations such as bureaux of educational research, national councils of women and media organizations

1.9 Information networking should be improved through the:

- identification of existing information networks within the region and assessment of their capacities, target groups and scope with a view to improving their effectiveness in disseminating information concerning girls' education
- setting up where necessary national focal points for information networking on girls' education.
- establishment of a mechanism for sustained cooperation and partnership among existing networks.

## **2. IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF GIRLS**

2.1 Studies related to the promotion of development undertaken by various countries and by funding agencies confirm the need to improve the quality of teaching, laying particular emphasis on girls' schooling, owing to the advantages derived from educating girls, including:

- improvement of nutrition and hygiene,
- reduction in mortality rates
- reduction of women's fertility
- increased of wages for working women.

**a) At regional level,** activities would focus on:

- sensitization of public for the mobilization of human resources and for raising financial resources in order to contribute to the design and implementation of programmes meant to improve girls' learning conditions;
- promotion of regional co-operation in designing gender-neutral textbooks which offer an enhanced perception of the role played by girls and women in society and in the world of labour
- supporting the collection of popular traditions (oral tradition, tales, songs and proverbs) emphasizing the role of women in African society
- keeping the education of girls as a priority on the regional agenda, and that of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)

**b) At national level,** special attention would be given to:

- a multisectoral approach working in close partnership with non-governmental organizations and the business community in the national efforts to improve education
- establishing courses to sensitize teachers to their role in promoting the education and status of girls to be included in both in-service and pre-service teacher-education programmes
- strengthening teacher education programmes to help teachers improve their techniques for remedial work and group study enabling them to promote learning among irregular attenders, particularly girls, and slow learners
- introduction of compulsory study time for girls in schools
- participation of school teachers in the development of school textbooks and supplementary readers
- establishing single-sex schools or organizing singlesex classes for girls in order to help them improve their school performance and achievement in science and mathematics education
- Strengthening mathematics and science education by starting the early science programme based on the knowledge which children acquire in their local environment before entering school and by providing sustained in-service teacher education

- Demystifying the science programme by translating its concepts and constructs into the day to day experiences of children, making science programmes more applicable and realistic to their daily lives
- using low-cost materials to appropriately equip schools for teaching science and technology
- where feasible and necessary, establishing boarding schools for those girls who have successfully completed the primary cycle and who live in sparsely populated remote areas
- increasing the role of parents' participation in school life so as to sensitize them and maintain regular attendance of the girl-child

### **Forging new partnerships**

The participation of the business and commerce sector in education has been initiated by Mrs. Susan Mubarak, First Lady of Egypt, and Mrs. Kate Kainje, the Hon. Minister of Education in Malawi. The idea is to involve this sector (one of the main users of the output of the education system) in the discussions on issues of education and planning for its improvement and expansion.

### **Improving girls' achievement in science education**

Research has shown that girls in single-sex schools perform better in science subjects than their counterparts in coeducational schools. Their successes have been attributed to various factors including: a) more opportunities for class participation and leadership; and b) less gender stereotyping by teachers and the girls themselves. In Nigeria, girls in single-sex classes are found to perform better than girls in co-educational groups

### **Girls boarding schools**

Although boarding schools are considered uneconomical, they seem to be the practical solution for girls who have successfully completed the primary cycle and who live in sparsely populated remote areas. Malawi and Kenya provide boarding schools for girls.

It is important, however, that the quality of facilities and personnel in the girls' boarding schools are comparable to that provided in the boys' schools.

A day/boarding schools organization would create more places for girls. Those girls living within walking distance from schools would attend a morning shift while the boarders would attend the evening shift. The school could also organize an extended day with the groups overlapping depending on the availability of space and facilities.

## **3. ACCESS TO EDUCATION**

3.1 Despite significant progress in the development of education in Africa during the past twenty years, girls' participation in education continues to trail that of boys; gender continues to play a major role in determining who goes to school. In general, the primary school enrolment ratio for girls in Africa is less than that of boys by at least 20 percentage points in about twenty-two countries. Their dropout rate is also greater than that of boys; few girls complete the primary school cycle.

**a) The formal education system needs to:**

- increase the number of school places in remote areas
- establish low-cost modular school-building design which is adaptable to available building materials and local skills and which can be constructed with the help of the communities
- develop, as an interim measure, a distance teacher education modality for training large numbers of teachers in the communities where the schools are located
- ensure access of all children to appropriate learning materials

**b) Non-formal education needs to:**

- provide non-formal education for primary school-age girls as an interim measure with a view to mainstreaming them
- ensure comparability between the quality of education provided non-formally and formally to allow for free movement of girls between the two
- be expanded in collaboration with various partners as such non-governmental organizations, religious bodies, service clubs (Rotary International, Lyons, Kiwanis and Jaycees), business and commerce sectors

**Location of schools**

Some girls have been denied schooling because of parental | fear for their security. Schools within walking distance | of the residences have attracted girls in Bhutan and Bangladesh but to a lesser extent in Egypt because there were other overriding factors which hindered their school attendance.

**Offering education in a more culturally appropriate environment**

Some parents prefer to send their girls to religious schools which will ensure their moral and religious development. In order to allow for a more general education for the girls, the formal curriculum is being introduced in religious schools in Kenya, the Gambia, Mauritania and Pakistan.

#### **4. EDUCATIONAL PLANNING, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSIVE TO GIRLS' CONCERNS**

4.1 Effective planning, management and administration of schools for promoting girls' education is to a large extent dependent on the prevailing education policies and the local ethos. They provide the context in which strategies such as the following can be developed:

- a. the creation of the awareness of the value of education through the advocacy of women's groups, and through the use of electronic, print and folk media;
- b. the building up and establishment of primary schools and feeder schools near the communities which they serve; and
- c. the establishment of community-based child care services which use the services of the older members of the community, thus allowing girls to attend school.

4.2 In the process of developing and improving the education system to make it more responsive to the needs of girls, those responsible should:

- clearly define, quantify and monitor targets in the context of the national development plans
- recognize the girl-child as the focal point in all activities
- assess the disparity between boys' and girls' education and develop and implement strategies to redress such disparity within a given time frame
- orient headteachers towards recognizing school factors which hinder girls' education and measures which need
- orient headteachers towards mobilizing school communities and families into participating in girls' education
- ensure that the proportion of females on the staff in all schools is no less than 50 per cent
- ensure that every child has access to learning materials for all
- provide in-service training opportunities teachers in remote areas

- strengthen the school inspectorate and headteachers in order to provide pedagogical support to primary school teachers
- mobilize resources for facilitating the expansion and upgrading of primary level education to ensure its availability to all children and giving special consideration to the conditions of service of teachers in primary schools
- distribute education resources in proportions that allow for the establishment of a primary education system which reaches at least 95 per cent of the nations' children
- through the use of modern technology, create the opportunity for those in rural areas to have access to technical and higher education
- monitor and evaluate the school system periodically to determine the extent to which it is effective in achieving its goals
- on the basis of the results of the monitoring and evaluation exercise, plan and introduce changes to improve the functioning of the system
- prepare a biennial monitoring report for presentation to the nation and to the Education for All Forum, starting 1995,

### **Access of children to reading materials**

Permanent literacy can be assured at an early age if children have access to appropriate reading materials. Schools, with the support of communities, could create 'box libraries' containing low-cost supplementary readers and reading cards. Ministries, in collaboration with partners could establish or expand mobile libraries with books and appropriate transport (motorcycle, van or donkey) for remote rural areas.

## **5 NATIONAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTING THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

5.1 Governments will seek to improve the role and status of women in the society as a whole. They will endeavour to:

review all national laws and regulations to identify the extent to which they are disadvantageous to women as regards such areas as: a) marital status, b) inheritance, c) landownership, d) access to credit and e) employment in the formal sector

- put in place judicial machinery to revise such laws and regulations in order to provide for a balance of rights between men and women
- prepare and implement rural development programmes designed to improve: a) water supply, b) electrical supplies, c) rural roads, d) agricultural machinery, e) income-generating activities, f) primary health care and improved nutrition and sanitation, and g) rural co-operatives and small factory complexes.

# Indicators of Girls' Education

## Primary/Elementary Level

- School-Age Population: Latest Year Available  
6-12 years; 13-17 years ( male; female; total )  
( to be determined according to available country population data )

**Data by region** (each section to be developed as an individual table )

	1993		1995		Change (+ or -)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2. Gross enrolment ratio (GER)						
3. Net enrolment ratio (NER)						
4. Enrolment by grade						
5. Age specific enrolment rate						
6. Proportion of teachers						
7. Proportion of trained teachers						
8. Textbook availability by grade						
9. Number of school places by grade						

- Average walking distance from girls' homes
- Pupil : teacher ratio by region and grade
- Reading achievement of girls and boys by grade  
Percentage of boys who are able to read by the end of grade 4  
Percentage of girls who are able to read by the end of grade 4
- Scholastic level by gender ( if thereis an examination at the end of the cycle )
- Public expenditure (recurrent only) per child

(primary/elementary school)

15. Allocation of GNP to education sector

**GENERAL ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTING THE STATES OF WOMEN**

16. Review of laws, regulations and policies concerning women, and the changes and adjustments made
17. Listing of rural development projects by:
  - Type of Project
  - Objectives
  - Estimated cost
  - Output to date
  - Number of female participants
  - Number of female beneficiaries
18. Percentage of female population of women in employment, by level of qualification
  - 1993 and 1995

**PAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS  
CONFERENCE PANAFRICAINNE SUR L'EDUCATION DES FILLES**

**Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso**

**28 March -1 April 1993  
28 mars - 1er avril 1993**

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