

# Because I am a Girl

THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S GIRLS 2007



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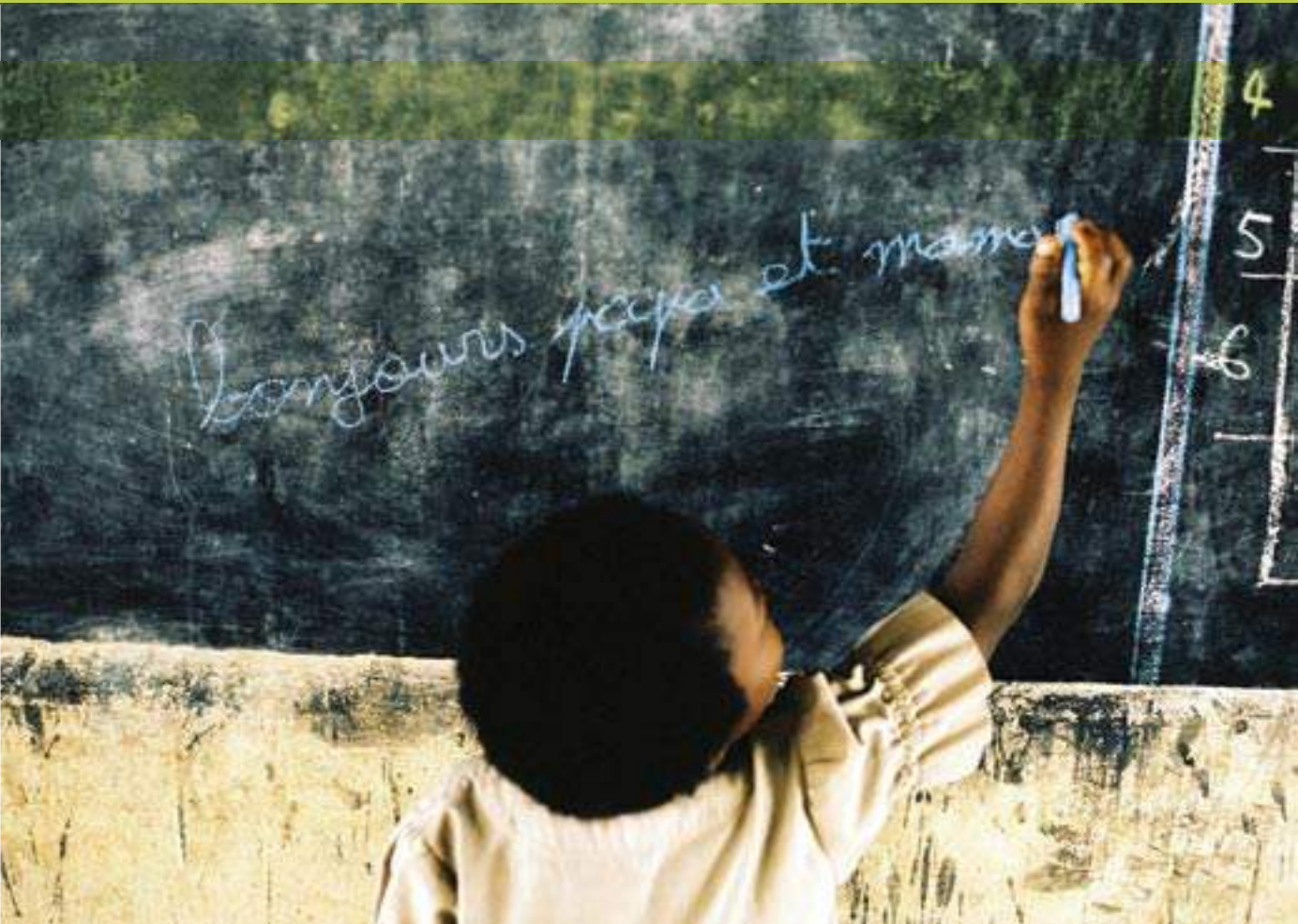
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*‘I never ever understand why boys and girls are not equal to each other. In rural areas elders think that girls are born to give birth and to marry and for cleaning the house. Girls who live in rural areas... are not sent to schools. Their parents are not aware of the changing world yet.’*

Girl, 15. Turkey

MARK READ





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# Contents

Foreword by Graça Machel ..... 8

Because We are Girls  
Real Choices, Real Lives  
Cohort Study ..... 10

Introduction ..... 14

Legal Opinion: Governments’  
Obligations to Girls by Professor  
Geraldine Van Bueren ..... 19

## Section 1

**Chapter 1**  
Survival: 100 million girls are missing..... 23

**Chapter 2**  
Family Life: Girls spend much more time  
on domestic, non-economic work than boys,  
and have less time for school and play ..... 33

**Chapter 3**  
Education: 62 million girls are not in  
primary school.....51

**Chapter 4**  
Health: Two-thirds of 15-19 year olds  
newly infected with HIV in sub-Saharan  
Africa are girls.....67

**Chapter 5**  
Making a Living: Seventy per cent of the  
1.5 billion people living on \$1 a day or less  
are female.....85

**Chapter 6**  
Girls in Exceptionally Difficult Circumstances:  
Nearly 50 per cent of sexual assaults worldwide  
are against girls aged 15 years or younger ..... 103

**Chapter 7**  
Conclusion ..... 117

References..... 122

## Section 2

Table 1: 1948 – 2007: 59 Years of International  
Legislation Specifically Addressing Girls’ Rights .... 132

Table 2: Basic Indicators on Gender ..... 154

Table 3: Basic Indicators on Girls’ Education ..... 164

Table 4: Reproductive Health of Young Women.....174

Table 5: Under fives weight comparison ..... 183

Table 6: Girls and Young Women at Work ..... 184

For Further Information on Girls’ Rights..... 188



# Foreword

This report 'Because I am a Girl' is a significant contribution to the efforts to document discrimination against girls and fight gender inequality. Even though women and girls represent over 50 per cent of the world's population, they occupy second-class status in every society. Gender inequality is pervasive and it begins before a girl child is even born. In every part of the world, families and societies treat girls and boys differently, with girls facing greater discrimination and accessing fewer opportunities and little or sub-standard education, health care and nutrition.

Whether she is born in Afghanistan or Zambia, the life of a girl – from the womb to childhood and then adolescence – is marred with neglect, disadvantage, and exploitation. The practice of female foeticide has resulted in a gender imbalance in some parts of the world and means that millions of girls who should be alive today are missing. Infant girls are less likely to survive than infant boys in some countries because of neglect. Despite consensus that female genital mutilation violates the health and human rights of girls, the phenomenon is widespread, with at least 2 million girls at risk of undergoing the practice every year. And while access to primary education for girls is expanding, many developing countries have

yet to achieve gender parity in primary and secondary education. If a girl does have access to school, she is more likely to drop out or be pulled out of school by her family than her brother. Becoming a teenager, means a new host of challenges for girls. Over 80 million girls in developing countries will be married before their 18th birthday. Girls are infected by HIV/AIDS in disproportionately high rates – three-quarters of the 15-24 year-olds infected with HIV, are young women and girls. Pregnancy is the leading cause of death for young women aged 15 to 19. Commercial sexual work, domestic work and other forms of child labour, trafficking and other forms of exploitation – the list of harmful actions faced by girls goes on.

Without gender equality none of the Millennium Development Goals will be achieved. That is why this report is so valuable. 'Because I am a Girl' documents the impact of gender inequality on the lives of girls. It shows clearly and powerfully that our failure to make an equal, more just world has resulted in the most intolerable of situations. In today's world, to discriminate on the basis of sex and gender is morally indefensible; economically, politically and socially unsupportable.

We have the legal instruments – in the form of the UN Convention on the Rights

of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), both signed and ratified by countless governments – to promote and protect the rights of girls. Now we must create strong national laws and implement the declarations and policies we have established. We must hold our decision-makers accountable, and work to change and educate society and families. We can no longer hide behind the defence of culture or traditional practices. We can no longer accept that girls should not be valued simply because they are not boys. And, we can no longer sit idly while our girls are abused, ignored and kept down. Some would argue that there's much we don't know; that we need more evidence and data before we implement programmes. There may be gaps in our knowledge, but we cannot let another minute go by without acting decisively and urgently. Unless we do, we will be condemning millions of girls to a life of poverty and hardship. There's too much at stake – our daughters and granddaughters are counting on us.

## **Graça Machel**

President of the Foundation for Community Development  
Chair of the GAVI Fund Board



# Because We are Girls

## Real Choices, Real Lives Cohort Study

As 'Because I am a Girl' will show, discrimination against girls and young women remains deeply entrenched and widely tolerated throughout the world. Many of the challenges girls will face start from the moment they are born; in fact in some parts of the world, girls are the target of a social preference for boys even before birth.

The 'Real Choices, Real Lives' cohort study was set up to follow 135 girls from birth until their ninth birthday, in 2015. Every year, researchers will visit the girls and their families to talk to them about what they eat, how healthy they are, their education, and over time will build up a picture of how the fact that they are girls impacts on their lives. Findings from the study will be published in each of Plan's 'State of the World's Girls' annual reports.

**1. Born in July 2006, Dossa lives in Benin. She was born in a local health centre and is lucky enough to have been in good health throughout her first few months of life. The infant mortality rate in Sub-Saharan Africa is 101 per 1000 live births. Dossa's mother has only ever been to primary school and is a market trader. There is a striking correlation between under-five mortality rates and the educational level attained by a child's mother.**

**2. Vo Le is the daughter of Vietnamese farmers. She was born in the local hospital with the help of a midwife in February 2006. Uniquely for Vietnam, Vo Le's mother has had more years of schooling than her father. This should place Vo Le at an advantage.**

The girls are from nine countries around the world. Some girls are from two of the poorest countries in the world – Benin and Togo. Others

are from rapidly growing economies, such as Vietnam. Some are from countries where the government has invested heavily in social programmes to benefit poor families, like Brazil.

**3. Brenda celebrated her first birthday at the beginning of March 2007. Her family lives in a village in El Salvador. Brenda was born at home, with no trained birth attendant or midwife for support. She has been ill with an ongoing chest infection, as well as occasional diarrhoea. Brenda's mother is Adina. She is herself still a girl. Adina is 14 years old. Brenda is Adina's second daughter.**

**4. Mary Joy was born in February 2006 at home with the help of a birth attendant. She lives with her family in a poor village in the Philippines. Mary Joy's mother takes care of the home and her father is a farmer. There is both an early years centre and a primary school in their village. The family has access to a hand pump which supplies them with water.**

The 'Real Choices, Real Lives' study will examine several key issues of importance to children, and in particular to girls who, as the report outlines, are increasingly vulnerable to a series of risks because of the position girls occupy in society:

- What is the family's access to quality services like?
- Is education girl-friendly?
- What about early years' provision, and the general needs of girls before adolescence?
- How are girls faring alongside their male siblings? What roles do they have to fulfil in the home?

**5. Chhea was born in August 2006 in a Cambodian village. She is the daughter of farmers. Chhea was born at home with the help of a birth attendant – there is no local health facility. The family uses a well for water and have no sanitary facilities. There are no schools in the village.**

**6. In a small village in Togo, Faissatou was born in February 2006. She was born at home, with her grandmother assisting the birth. Faissatou's parents were educated up to primary level. Her mother takes care of the family and her father is a farmer. There is no local health centre nor is there a secondary school locally. The family use a well for water all year round.**

So why do a study on girls' lives?

- **There is a need for qualitative information about why girls continue to face discrimination.** An eight year study will provide the opportunity to talk to girls and their families about their attitudes and opinions on the girls' upbringing. Surveys often focus more on issues that are easy to measure, such as the number of girls in school, and less on how girls may feel about their school environment.
- **Information on girls is often segmented,** as we have seen in the research undertaken for this report. There is some good information about their education or about aspects of their health. This has not been brought together to produce a comprehensive picture of what is going on in girls' lives over a period of time.
- **The life cycle approach** taken in the report, provides an important lens for examining girls' rights. As the study will

cover several important stages of the girls' lives over eight years, evidence of pervasive issues and critical points of vulnerability should start to emerge.

**7. In her short life, Trassy has already had a bout of malaria. Malaria is the biggest killer of children under the age of five in Sub-Saharan Africa, often leaving those who survive with persistent anaemia. Trassy was born in May 2006 in Uganda. She was born at the local health post with the assistance of a midwife. Trassy's mother, Elisabeth, went to secondary school. She now farms together with Trassy's father. There is both a primary and secondary school within reach of their home.**

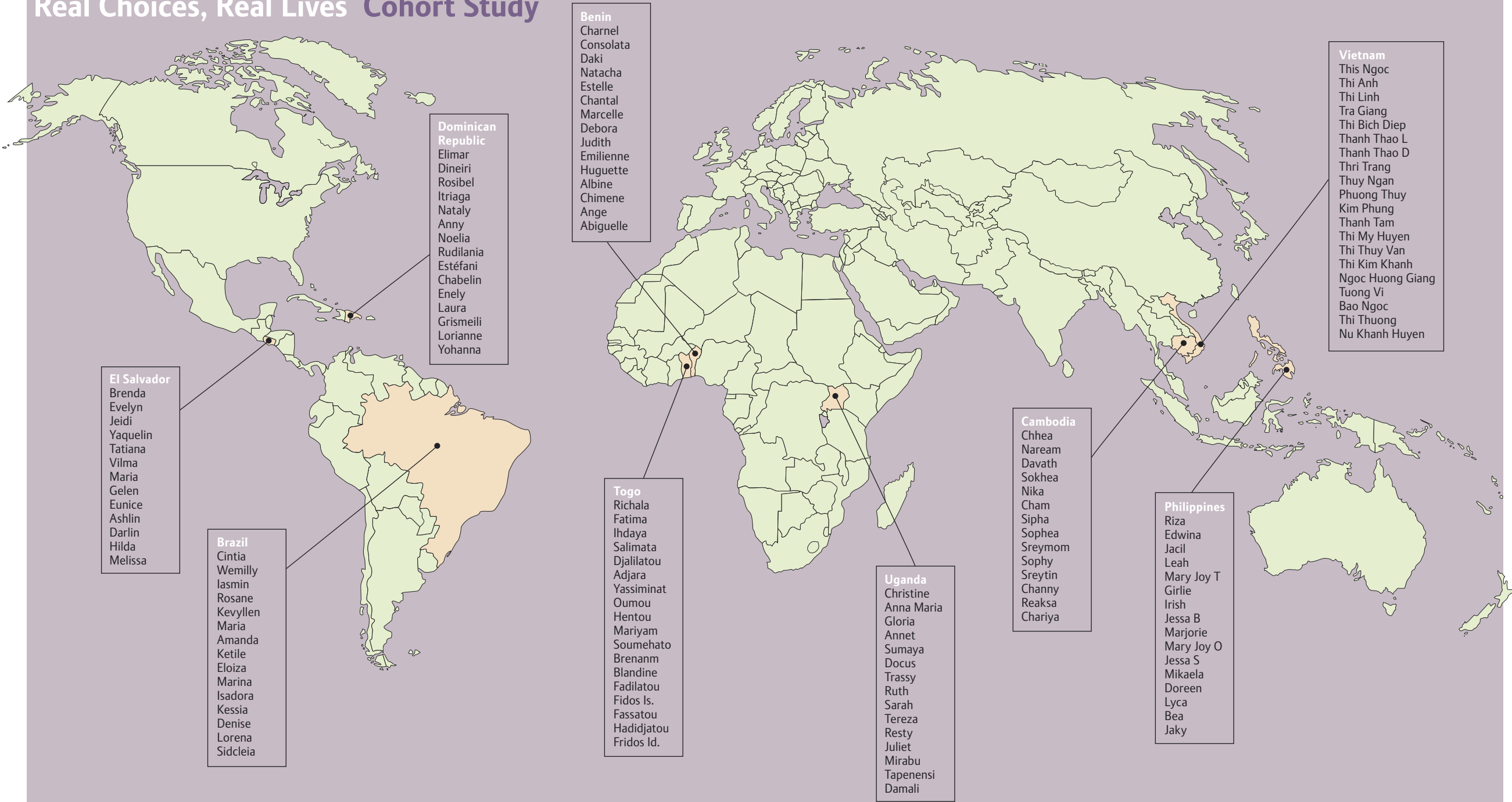
**8. Rosane was born in July 2006 on the outskirts of a Brazilian town. She is being brought up by her mother who has only completed six years of schooling. There is no local secondary school, which will massively limit Rosane's chances of attending school beyond primary level.**

This year's report has introduced you to eight of the girls taking part in the study. Over the next eight years, the lives and challenges of the other girls and their families will form part of this annual publication.

Despite living thousands of miles away from each other, what these girls all have in common as they grow up is their experience as girls. This will unite them in the choices they can or cannot make about their lives.

# Because We are Girls

## Real Choices, Real Lives Cohort Study





# Introduction

*“I am sure that all of you will agree with me that when our societies generate immeasurably more wealth than at any previous period, it is unacceptable that so many human beings continue to live in miserable circumstances – economically marginalised, unable to secure their own or their families’ basic needs, and living under the recurrent threat of violence and conflict. This is particularly true for women and girls.”<sup>1</sup>*

Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

***“I think girls MUST have the full freedom to do what they want. Girls know they can make it. Just keep your head high and keep moving on.”***

Girl, 16, India.<sup>2</sup>

Girls are getting a raw deal. Despite having the same rights as their brothers, they face discrimination even before they are born. There are an estimated 100 million missing women because of the practice of female foeticide. As they grow up girls suffer more from malnutrition, because families feed boys first, affecting girls’ well-being for the rest of their lives. They are less likely to go to school: almost two-thirds of the children of primary school age out of school are girls. They are more likely to be subject to violence: millions of girls are subjected to daily violence in the home and at school, which should be places of safety. Underinvestment in girls can hold back the economic development of some of the world’s poorest countries; girls have a real contribution to make.

‘Because I am a Girl’ is the first of a series of annual reports focusing on girls and young women in the world. Produced by Plan, the reports will be published every year from 2007 to 2015 – the 20th anniversary of the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women. This report will provide a wealth of secondary data and case study material on the major issues of concern

for girls. It will also demonstrate what is being done at local, national and international levels, as well as highlight the concerted effort needed for real progress.

In order to monitor girls’ development and bring to life the inequalities buried in global statistics, the report introduces a cohort of approximately 135 girls in 9 countries, born in 2006. The baby girls include Chimene from Benin, Vilma from El Salvador and Thuy from Vietnam, as well as baby girls from Uganda, Togo, Brazil, Philippines, Dominican Republic and Cambodia. Plan will follow these girls for the next eight years and report on their progress and development throughout the report series.

So why a report on girls and young women?

Girls and young women, who make up almost a quarter of the world’s population, probably face the greatest discrimination of any group of this size in the world. In most societies and families, traditional gender roles and power relations place women and girls in disadvantaged situations relative to men and boys. This is true throughout the life cycle; female babies in many countries are aborted or simply go ‘missing’; adolescent girls often have few rights over their own lives and their own bodies; they are ‘owned’ by their father until they are married and then by their husband. Subjected to early marriage, female genital cutting, more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and given less basic nutrition than their brothers, girls are also less likely to be educated and more likely to be poor than boys of the same age.

In the North, it would seem that gender equality has been achieved. Girls are doing as well or better than boys at school, young women are out there in force in the workplace, and they share childcare with their partners. However, women are still less likely than men to reach positions of power when they grow up, they still do more of the housework, and they still do not earn as much as the boys they studied with. This

## 6 out of 8 Millennium Development Goals are in jeopardy

### **MDG 1 Eliminate extreme poverty and hunger**

**Target: Reduce by half the number of people living on less than a dollar a day**  
**Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger**

The majority of those living on less than \$1 a day are female. Girls and young women are not fulfilling their potential and this is impacting on the world’s poorest economies in particular. An extra year of education can boost a girls’ eventual wages by between 10 and 20 percent.

### **MDG 2 Universal Primary Education**

**Target: All children will have a full primary schooling by 2015**

This target will not be reached unless MDG 3 is met and initiatives that encourage girls to remain in school are implemented. 62 million girls are out of school.

### **MDG 3 Promote gender equality and empower women**

**Target: Ensure gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2005**

Although there has been some progress towards reaching this goal, the target was not met by 2005.

### **MDG 4 Reduce infant mortality**

**Target: Reduce by two-thirds by 2015**

Despite girls’ natural resilience at birth, more girls than boys die before the age of five in many parts of the world. If action is not taken, MDG 4 will not be met. An important factor here is that the preference for boys is a major concern in the two most populous countries on earth, China and India.

### **MDG 5 Improve maternal health**

**Target: Reduce by three-quarters by 2015 the maternal mortality rate**

Complications from pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death among young women aged 15 to 19 in the developing world. The younger girls are when they give birth, the higher the risk of complications that could lead to death.

### **MDG 6 Tackle HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases**

**Target: Halt by 2015 and reverse the spread of HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases**

Young women have less knowledge than young men on HIV infection, yet are more at risk of becoming infected in the first place. Reversing the spread of AIDS is dependent on reducing the infection rates of young women and tackling the gendered behaviour which determines their lack of choice in decisions about sex.

will not improve as they get older. In the UK, a recent report found that women are “woefully under-represented” in the country’s boardrooms, politics and courts and that in some areas the situation is getting worse rather than better. It also pointed out that although the pay gap between young men and women is only 3.7 per cent, it rises to 10.7 per cent for those in their thirties, when they become parents.<sup>3</sup>

There are a number of international laws and agreements that relate to girls and young women, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action (see table 1 in Section 2) and the Millennium Development Goals. Many of their aims for girls have not been achieved and most are breached on a daily basis. Even where there is legislation at national level, young women have few opportunities to appeal when their rights are not upheld by the state.

Economically, it does not make sense to neglect girls and young women. Lack of progress by girls is stopping the world’s governments meeting the Millennium Development Goals. As this report shows, girls have a very real contribution to make to society as daughters, mothers, wives, sisters, students and also as workers. Under-investment in girls can hold back the economic development of poor countries. And no country has yet emerged from poverty without investing in education, including that of its girls. Evidence from Burkina Faso shows that if women farmers had as much access to resources as their menfolk, agricultural productivity would increase by 20 per cent.<sup>4</sup>

There are large gaps in data on girls and young women. While statistics now exist in some areas for women and for children, there is very little – except at a micro level – that relates to girls and young women, and statistics are rarely disaggregated by age as well as sex.

UN agencies, international NGOs, governments and academics all publish

research on different aspects of the subject, and studies on girls in particular countries. There are global studies on women and on gender and on children, most recently UNICEF’s State of the World’s Children 2007 report, but nothing comprehensive on girls and young women. Despite evidence of specific threats to development arising from the neglect of girls’ rights there has been no systematic approach to looking at how these challenges are being overcome.

‘Because I am a Girl’ takes a rights-based approach to girls’ situations at different stages in their lives. It examines why the combination of continuing gender discrimination, and the neglect of the particular needs of girls, have meant that girls all over the world have fewer opportunities than their brothers. And by also taking a lifecycle approach to girls’ development we can identify the different needs of girls at the various stages of their lives, as well as the pervasive issues across the life cycle, such as lack of access to services or vulnerability to violence. Finally, we call for a series of initiatives and interventions focused on the particular needs of girls and young women.

Investment in girls bears fruit. If in doubt consider the experience of some of the girls and young women featured in this report: girls such as Nagina Habib from Pakistan, who has found a new confidence through her community school, or Marleni Cuellar, who at the age of 20 has built a new youth movement in the Caribbean to combat violence.

To tackle gender discrimination at its roots, action is needed at every stage of a girl’s life – from the womb, as babies and toddlers, at school and as adolescents. Specific programmes looking at girls’ needs are vital. These must be sustained and broadened and should be looked at not just over the short years of childhood, but over two or three generations. Action is urgently needed to change the attitudes that underpin discrimination and violence against

girls and young women. Much has already been achieved, but much more has to be done.

**Chapter one** looks at discrimination which begins at, or even before, birth, and how this continues throughout a girl’s life. **Chapter two** examines how attitudes to girls are rooted in negative family experiences based on tradition. **Chapter three** looks at the efforts being made to improve girls’ education and the benefits that are reaped from this by society as a whole. **Chapter four** looks at aspects of health particular to girls and young women – not just reproductive health but other areas where they are worse off than boys. **Chapter five** covers the changing – and sometimes unchanging – world of work, where young women still work longer hours and are paid less than boys. **Chapter six** looks at girls in particularly vulnerable situations – either because they have disabilities, are from minority, indigenous or other groups that make them doubly or even triply discriminated against, or because they are affected by disasters, or conflict. Each chapter highlights specific priorities for action and the final chapter makes overall calls for change.

#### Who is a girl?

**The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as anyone under the age of 18. A young person is defined as someone between the age of 10 and 24. An adolescent is between 10 and 19, divided into ‘early adolescence’ (10 – 14 years) and ‘late adolescence’ between 15 and 19. For the purposes of this report, a girl is anyone up to the age of 18 and a young woman up to 25.**

#### Sex and Gender

**While sex is the biological difference between women and men (what we are born with), gender is the set of roles, behaviour patterns, values and responsibilities women and men, girls**

#### Global discrimination against girls and young women<sup>5</sup>

- In Asia, at least 60 million girls are ‘missing’ from the population, despite laws banning sex-determination testing and sex-selective abortions.<sup>6</sup>
- An estimated 121 million children currently do not attend primary school. The majority – 54 per cent – are girls. So are the majority of illiterates: about 57 million young men and 96 million young women aged 15-24 in developing countries cannot read or write.
- An estimated 7.3 million young women are living with HIV and AIDS compared to 4.5 million young men. Two-thirds of newly infected youth aged 15-19 in Sub-Saharan Africa are female.
- Despite a shift toward later marriage in many parts of the world, 82 million girls in developing countries who are now aged 10 to 17 will be married before their 18th birthday, despite laws forbidding this in many cases. More than 70,000 teenage girls are married each day.<sup>7</sup> In some countries, the majority of girls still marry before their 18th birthday. These include India (50 per cent), Nepal (60 per cent) and Niger (76 per cent).
- Worldwide, some 14 million girls and women between ages 15 and 19 – both married and unmarried – give birth each year. That is 40,000 every day. Pregnancy is a leading cause of death for young women aged 15 to 19 worldwide, with complications of childbirth and unsafe abortion being the major factors.
- Girls aged 15 to 19 are twice as likely to die in childbirth as those in their twenties. Girls under age 15 are five times as likely to die as those in their twenties.
- Younger women and adolescent girls are especially vulnerable to gender-based violence. Nearly 50 per cent of all sexual assaults worldwide are against girls 15 years or younger.<sup>8</sup>
- An estimated 450 million adult women in developing countries are stunted as a result of childhood protein-energy malnutrition.<sup>9</sup>



**and boys have learnt or end up playing in their family, community and in society at large. These gender specific roles are socially constructed and therefore changeable as they depend on historical, cultural, political and social contexts.**

This report is not just about girls as victims of abuse and discrimination. It shows how in many places, given support, girls and young women – sometimes in conjunction with boys and men – defend their rights and fight the age-old traditions and attitudes that harm them. Girls and young women are the best defenders of their rights, but they need support and encouragement to speak out, and role models to show them how it is done.

As one British girl aged 15 put it: “We can show [everyone] what girls can achieve if they put their minds to it: we can, somehow, lift the notion that girls are a burden! We have to let the females of the... world have a voice! A voice that can be heard across the globe, a voice that will be listened to by those good people of our society, a voice that will bring change into their lives.”<sup>10</sup>

Plan has worked with an advisory panel and a group of partners – UN agencies, international NGOs, organisations made up of girls, and other organisations working to secure girls’ and women’s rights – to develop this report, and to gather the latest data and information on girls’ rights from around the world. In compiling this report it has become clear to us that girls and young women need to be given the opportunity to secure their human rights. While they are marginalised, they will have little capacity, courage, and confidence to participate in decisions about their lives and about the society in which they live. This report gives us a chance to learn about how girls across the world can change their own world.

### **Plan International and girls**

Founded 70 years ago, Plan is one of the largest child-centred community development organisations in the world. Plan works in 66 countries on programmes and initiatives that address the causes of poverty and its consequences for children’s rights and their lives.

This means working in partnership with children, their families and communities, and at national and international levels, to bring about sustainable change. At a local level, we work directly with all groups in a community to identify the priority issues affecting children. We actively encourage girls and boys to analyse their own situations and raise their awareness of the fundamental rights to which they are entitled. We then support the community to build the skills and access the resources it needs to implement programmes that will lead to positive change in children’s lives.

Plan campaigns for both girls and boys to achieve their rights, and we work at national and international levels to influence policy decisions that will lead to improved resources for children and their communities. In this way, we create and maximise all opportunities for children to speak out on their own behalf and participate in decision-making that affects their own development.

Plan believes that we cannot realise our vision for the rights of girls and boys without working towards gender equality. We believe that gender inequality is a key obstacle to the achievement of children’s rights and that it is therefore central to achieving Plan’s mission and vision.<sup>11</sup> The process of compiling the data for this report has helped us to examine our own practices, for example, routinely disaggregating data by gender. Just as Plan has learnt from others through the process of this research, we will be working in partnership with UN agencies, other international NGOs, national governments, local organisations and communities, girls and boys towards this goal.

## **Legal Opinion: Governments’ obligations to girls**

### **The Status and Effects of Article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989**

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is a gender responsive treaty, so that its provisions are to be dynamically applied to enhance the entitlements of the girl without stereotyping or marginalising either gender. Although the Convention omits the word girl this does not mean that the treaty is gender neutral as this implies that concealed in the treaty’s text is the philosophy that gender is irrelevant. It is important to dispel such an erroneous conclusion, which risks robbing girls of the potential of a powerful treaty designed to combat sex discrimination against the girl.

In article 2 the Convention prohibits in the strongest terms sex discrimination and implies that girls as well as boys should enjoy all of the rights provided for in the Convention on an equal basis and in their totality. This is necessary because eradicating stereotypes of the boy contributes to the raising of the status of the girl.

Article 2 has been described as one of the four general principles of the Convention.<sup>1</sup> Although the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has not issued a General Comment defining discrimination, the definition of sex discrimination appropriate to girls can be developed by building upon the definition in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women 1979.<sup>2</sup> Sex discrimination is discrimination, which offends the human dignity of the girl and includes any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose, whether hidden or overt, of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise of children’s rights by girls irrespective of their status, on a basis of equality of boys and girls. Thus article 2 enshrines the tripartite goals of seeking to achieve formal equality, equality of opportunity and equality of results.

The areas in which girls suffer sex discrimination can be classified into five grounds. Firstly invisibility, and this includes pre-birth gender selection, lack of birth registration and public environments, which are unsafe for girls, marginalising them and discouraging their visibility. Secondly capacity which affects the full ability of girls to benefit from all of their Convention rights. Impaired capacity is contributed to, for example, by educational curricula, which reinforce negative gender stereotyping, and by preferential access to nutrition within families for boys. Thirdly, physical and mental discrimination, which includes gender based violence and trafficking, temporary marriages, and judgemental attitudes to sexual activity of girls, limiting their access to preventative measures and other health services including HIV/AIDS. The fourth ground is in the area of family and household

responsibilities. This includes discrimination caused by lower minimum ages of marriage for girls and the sexual and economic exploitation of girls as domestic workers. The fifth form of sex discrimination is local and national customs and traditions including embedded religious, judicial and secular traditions, which allow for the creation of status offences discriminating against girls in the legal system and inequality in inheritance.

The obligation enshrined in article 2 (1) is to ‘respect and ensure’ that all the Convention rights are enjoyed without the barrier of sex discrimination, whether direct or indirect. Direct discrimination is where a difference in treatment is explicitly based on sex and which cannot be objectively justified. Indirect discrimination occurs where a law, policy or programme may not appear at first sight to be discriminatory but has a discriminatory effect when implemented.

The legal duty to ‘respect’ requires States parties to refrain from discriminatory actions which result in the denial for girls of their enjoyment of children’s rights. Respecting requires the repealing of laws and policies, which do not conform to the equality principle. In particular it requires States parties to consider whether the effect of apparently gender-neutral laws and policies could result in a negative impact on the ability of the girls to enjoy children’s rights on the basis of equality.

The obligation to ensure is the highest duty placed upon States parties and implies that States parties should take all necessary steps including the removal of obstacles to the equal enjoyment of Convention rights, the education of the population, the training of state officials and the reforming of domestic legislation. The State party must not only adopt measures to protect the girl against discrimination but must introduce positive measures to empower girls and to respect their evolving capacities. To do this States parties are required to acquire necessary information regarding the role of girls in society to ascertain which measures, in addition to legislation, need to be implemented.

The obligation to ‘ensure’ extends to the public and the private sectors and applies in peace-time and in internal and external armed conflicts, where the vulnerability of girls is often overlooked. States parties are also obligated to implement national policies to provide for the establishment of effective children’s rights mechanisms and institutions to investigate and address sex discrimination of the girl. This includes the gathering of disaggregated statistics within specified time frames.

The obligation to protect against sex discrimination is inter-generational as article 2(2) obliges States parties to ensure that the girl ‘is protected’ against all forms of discrimination and punishment on the basis of the status of the girl’s parents, guardians or family members. The obligation to protect requires the States parties to take steps directly to eliminate prejudices that perpetuate the notion of inferiority from mother to daughter.

The obligation to prevent sex discrimination also obliges States parties to identify groups of girls, including girls with disabilities and refugees who may be compoundly disadvantaged and whose rights may demand permanent or temporary special measures.<sup>3</sup>

The most significant formal limiting factor on the potential of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to achieve equality for girls is a number of wide-ranging reservations which some states have attached on agreement to the Convention. Reservations which are too broad and which in effect place national law, whether secular or religious, above international law undermine the object and purpose of the Convention and are open to challenge.<sup>4</sup>

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# Survival

## 100 million girls are missing

# 1

### Convention on the Rights of the Child

#### Article 6

- States Parties recognise that every child has the inherent right to life.
- States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

### 1. Introduction

*"Oh, God, I beg of you,  
I touch your feet time and again,  
Next birth don't give me a daughter,  
Give me Hell instead..."*  
Folk Song From Uttar Pradesh<sup>1</sup>

Discrimination against girls begins at birth, or even before they are born, through attitudes and patterns in behaviour passed down through generations. The disadvantage of being born a girl today includes the facts that girls are more likely to be killed in the womb, girls are more likely to be malnourished, and young mothers are more at risk of developing serious complications both for the mother and her unborn child. These will all have an impact at every stage of a girl or young woman's life.

In many countries, the birth of a boy is something to be celebrated, the birth of a girl a cause for commiseration. One report notes that: "While a number of national and international legal norms protect the rights of the girl child in theory; in practice cultural and social beliefs about gender and the value of girls and boys have been much more difficult to overcome... By age five, most girls and boys have already

internalised the gender role expectations communicated to them by their families, schools, the media and society as a whole, and these norms will influence their behaviour and their development for the rest of their lives."<sup>2</sup>

A United Nations High Commission for Human Rights report singled out Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, the Cameroon, Liberia, Madagascar and Senegal as countries with a strong preference for boys.<sup>3</sup> Although the situation is generally better in Latin America, in Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay, under five mortality rates are higher for girls than for boys, which is a sign that boys are the preferred sex.<sup>4</sup> These figures are all the more worrying since baby girls are expected to survive due to their natural resilience at birth.

Much of this is to do with the fact that in some cultures, a boy will grow up and look after his parents, while a girl will be married into another family, and is therefore seen as a financial burden to her own parents. Except in a few matrilineal or similar societies (for example, in some regions of Ethiopia), a girl takes her husband's family name, dropping that of her family. She is brought up from an early age to see herself as less important than her male relatives. Her contribution to the household in terms of cooking, cleaning, looking after siblings and fetching water or fuel is not valued. Her lower social status will have serious consequences for her health and well-being as she grows up and has children herself. Her daughters too are likely to repeat the same cycle.



**First born daughter**  
*“I am the first child of my parents. I have a small brother at my home. If the first child were a son, my parents might be happy and would be confident as their future is assured by having a son. But I am a daughter. I complete all the household tasks, go to school, again do the household activities in the evening and at night only I do my school homework and I study. Despite all the activities, my parents do not give value or recognition to me. They only have praise for my brother, as he is the son.”*  
Girl, aged 15, Nepal<sup>5</sup>

2. Female foeticide

*“When a son is born,  
Let him sleep on the bed,  
Clothe him with fine clothes,  
And give him jade to play...  
When a daughter is born,  
Let her sleep on the ground,  
Wrap her in common wrappings,  
And give broken tiles to play...”*  
Chinese ‘Book of Songs’ (1000-700 B.C.)<sup>6</sup>

The desire for a male heir is so strong in some countries that it can lead to the infanticide of female babies. A recent development of this has been an increasing number of abortions of female foetuses after an ultrasound reveals their sex. Estimates of the number of ‘missing’ girls and women due to such practices vary, but some are as high as 100 million.

Biologically, there should be more women than men in the world, as around 105 female babies are born to every 100 males. In Europe and North America, this is roughly the proportion of women to men. But in South Asia, West Asia, and China, the ratio can be as low as 94 women to 100 men. Professor Amartya Sen notes: “These numbers tell us, quietly, a terrible story of inequality and neglect leading to the excess mortality of women.”<sup>7</sup>

In China alone this amounts to 50 million ‘missing women’. In a 2002 survey conducted

in a central China village, more than 300 of the 820 women had had abortions and more than a third admitted they were trying to select their baby’s sex. “We have to act now or the problem will become very serious,” said sociologist Professor Xia Xueluan.<sup>8</sup>

In India, a study of 1.1 million households came to the conclusion that: “Based on conservative assumptions, the practice accounts for about 0.5 million missing female births yearly.” It continues: “Anecdotal evidence suggests that access to ultrasound is fairly widespread, even in rural areas, and although prenatal sex determination has been illegal since 1994 the law is often ignored.”<sup>9</sup> Over the past two decades, this “translates into the abortion of some 10 million female foetuses.”<sup>10</sup> The practice is more common among educated families than poor households.

In one clinic in India, a woman waits for an abortion. She has two daughters aged 11 and seven years, and has had nine abortions in the hope of having a son. “Dr Geeta gives everyone a son. I hope she will give me one as well,” she says fervently. When asked the reason for her desperation, her voice cracks, “I want a son as we have a big business. I want what my husband has built from ‘scratch’ to go to his own blood. I can’t think of adoption. My daughters will marry and go away; our son would stay and look after the family.”<sup>11</sup>

In Pakistan the ‘cradle baby’ programme of the Edhi Foundation saves around 1,500 abandoned children a year. A white metal cradle, lined with a thin mattress, stands outside Edhi centre entrances. A nearby sign urges desperate parents to deposit infants there rather than do anything harsher. Of the children abandoned 80 per cent are girls.<sup>12</sup>

In India, there have been a number of campaigns to end the sex selection of boy children before birth. In Haryana State, where sex ratio imbalances are among the highest in the country, women have banded together to form *jagriti mandals* (forums of awakening) aimed at promoting the rights of their daughters. To counter huge profits in sex identification services and abortions, these groups convince families and doctors of the

broader social costs. In Punjab, religious leaders have issued diktats and have threatened to excommunicate couples who abort female foetuses.<sup>13</sup> Plan, together with the Indian Government, produced a 13-part soap opera ‘Atmajaa’ (Born from the Soul) to highlight pre-natal diagnostic tests and to try and change opinion on the issue. They felt that using a Bollywood style soap, rather than a lack-lustre government warning, would reach a wider audience and start the process of change.

In 2005 the well-known and colourful religious leader and social activist, Swami Agnivesh, led a caravan of 25 vehicles and 200 people across five Indian states to campaign against female foeticide. “If you want to save your religion, you have to save your daughter first. God created the same sun and moon for both the sexes, so who are we to discriminate against the girl child?”, he said.<sup>14</sup>

3. Birth registration

**Convention on the Rights of the Child**

Article 7  
The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to be cared for by his or her parents.

Article 8  
States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognised by law without unlawful interference.

*“I got my affidavit of birth registration in 2005 thanks to Plan. I became very happy because my father kept saying that he did not have money to ensure my birth registration. The document permitted me to apply for and be admitted to sit the secondary school entrance examination. Many of my friends were rejected due to the lack of birth certificates.”*  
Mawoussé, aged 10, Benin.

*“It is for this reason that some young girls get discouraged with school and drop out at a lower class in the primary school as they cannot write the class seven final examinations for lack of birth certificate. They then choose to accompany their mothers to the farms or marry. What fate awaits these young girls at this age when they are not able to continue school because of the birth certificate? Knowing that educating a girl is educating a nation; what type of a nation are we building if the young girl is not educated?”*  
Nan, aged 15, Cameroon.<sup>15</sup>

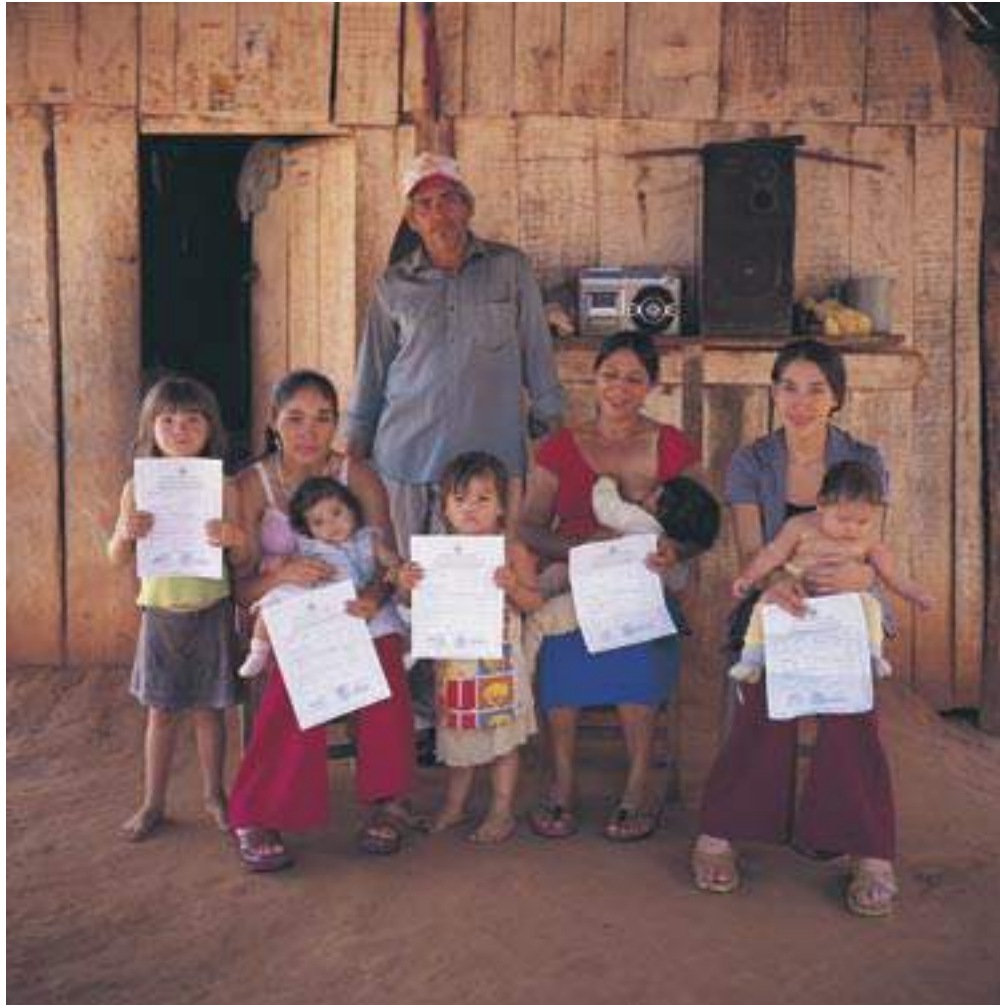
The Convention on the Rights of the Child states clearly that it is a child’s right to be registered at birth. And yet 36 per cent of births are not registered. This amounts to 48 million babies who do not have a record of their right to exist.<sup>16</sup> This means it is much more difficult to open a bank account, get credit, vote, get a job or have access to health care and sometimes go to school. Birth registration also helps to prevent child labour, protects girls from early marriage and boys from underage conscription. So why is birth registration an important right for girls in particular? It gives them access to education and health services, but also can protect them from early marriage, child trafficking and abuse.

On average, over half of births in the developing world (excluding China) are not registered. In South Asia, this figure rises to over

Registered births in developing countries, percentages		
(Data refer to the most recent year available during the period 1999-2005) <sup>18</sup>		
	Urban	Rural
Sub-Saharan Africa	54	32
East and Southern Africa	44	28
West and Central Africa	59	34
South Asia	47	25
East Asia and Pacific (excluding China)	77	56
Latin America and Caribbean	92	78

UNICEF, The State of the World's Children 2007





ADAM HINTON

Registered and proud: children in Paraguay display their birth certificates.

70 per cent. In Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Tanzania and Uganda the rate of birth registration is less than seven per cent.<sup>17</sup> The registration rate is lower in rural than in urban areas.

Launching Plan's global campaign for universal birth registration, South Africa's Archbishop Desmond Tutu said: "It's time we made this one of the priority concerns of the international community. What happens when you can't prove your birth or your nationality? It's about the right to an identity and it's something that from then on will give you access to the privileges and rights of a citizen."<sup>19</sup>

Birth registration campaigns are beginning to make a difference. Plan's global campaign

has led to five million children being registered since 2004.<sup>20</sup> For example, in Bangladesh, UNICEF is supporting birth registration campaigns in 17 districts, several municipalities and four city corporations, starting in 1997. By the end of 2003, more than five million children were registered.

Phina's case illustrates how birth registration is crucial for protecting girls' rights. She is a 13-year-old from Uganda who was sexually abused. Her father Mukasa wanted to bring a case against her abuser. But when he tried to do so, he could not prove that she was underage – because she had no certificate. Mukasa says: "If only I had registered my

daughter at birth, I would have won the case. I would have protected her." A campaign in the area is now helping people to realise just how important registration is. One young mother said: "I want to protect my children's inheritance and property. I want them to have what I never got; access to education. I want them to know and have proof of who their parents are. Above all, I want them to realise that they are citizens of Uganda."<sup>21</sup>

In Benin, research uncovered a "vicious cycle of no identification papers and no representation at decision-making level."<sup>22</sup> Because women had no birth certificates, they were not eligible to stand for election. For example, at local council level, only 38 out of 1,119 councillors nationwide are women. As a result, women were not able to push for campaigns for birth registration. The research noted that: "The great majority of women willing to run for the elections could not produce two of the most critical legal papers: birth certificates and identity cards." This was not surprising, in view of the fact that certificates cost \$21, whereas most of the population earn under \$2 a day. A project was set up which held meetings and undertook publicity and advocacy work about the problems and cost of getting birth certificates and to look at the underlying reasons why. The project ended with 1,848 women acquiring birth certificates, some successful campaigning on cost, and a more general awareness-raising about the importance of registration.

#### A girl's first gift

This is the view of Seema, a 17-year-old girl from Bardarpur, India.

*"I am a member of Bal-Panchayat (Children's Council), which is initiated by CASP-Plan in Delhi. It is a group of children who are aware about their rights and responsibilities. It uses many mediums to spread its messages such as rallies, street play, community fair, sports day, working on children's communication skill etc. It has around 1200 children as its members..."*

*"We give the information to the parents about the importance and advantages of birth registration. Recently we have organised a community level parents' meeting in Badarpur where the members of Bal-Panchayat conducted the meeting."*

*"We saw many changes in our communities through our activities but we have to face many problems. Sometimes people removed the posters that we put on the walls, sometimes they tease us especially during performing street plays. Sometimes we face problems in organising parents' meetings but our unity helps us to organise these activities smoothly."*

*"The future of India will be bright and strong when the government, the people and parents will give their children their identity. This is the demand of my group and mine that every child should get its rights. Every child should have his/her first gift as birth certificate."<sup>23</sup>*

## 4. A girl's right to life

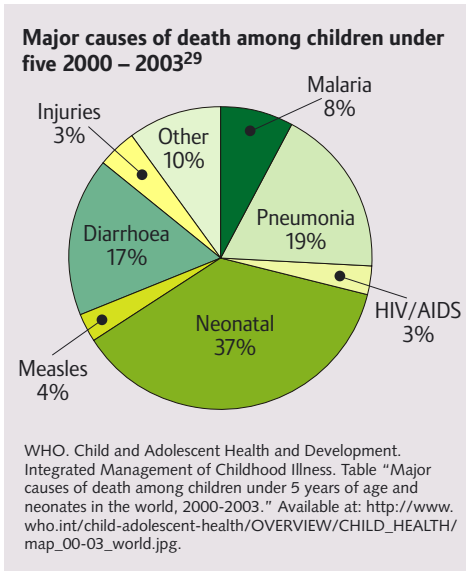
Very little of the data on infant and child mortality rates makes a distinction between girls and boys. In general, male infant and child mortality rates should be higher than female rates as girls have a biological advantage over boys. But inadequate feeding and care can reverse this biological advantage. Where this is the case, it is often to do with gender discrimination. This is true in many parts of South Asia and in other countries as well. In Ecuador, in 2001, 132 girls died for every 108 boys in the first year of life.<sup>24</sup>

In 2000, Millennium Development Goal Four pledged governments to reduce mortality in children aged younger than five by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015.

Each year 4 million newborns die before the age of 4 weeks.<sup>26</sup> In 2004, an estimated 10.5 million children and infants died before the age of five. That means 30,000 children dying every day. The health and survival of newborn

Under five mortality rates (rate per 1,000 live births, 2004) <sup>25</sup>		
	1999	2004
Sub-Saharan Africa	188	169
Eastern and Southern Africa	167	146
Western and Central Africa	209	190
Middle East and North Africa	81	54
South Asia	129	84
East Asia and Pacific	58	33
Latin America and Caribbean	53	35
CEE/CIS	54	38
Industrialised countries	10	6
Developing countries	105	83
Least developed countries	182	153
<b>World</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>76</b>

UNICEF. The State Of The World's Children 2006.



children is closely linked to that of their mother. Poor children are more likely to die than those born in richer families – a survey of 56 countries showed that poorer children are more than twice as likely to die as children from richer families.<sup>27</sup> In Bolivia, for example, newborn babies born to poor families are 70 per cent more likely to die than those born in richer families.<sup>28</sup> The same is true for babies born in rural areas – in Bolivia, Niger, Peru and



VALARIE BURTON

Vietnam, rural babies are 50 per cent more likely to die than those born in urban areas. And the real tragedy is that so many of these deaths are from preventable diseases.

Most deaths under one month old occur in the developing world where mothers may be undernourished, lack access to clinics, hospitals and antenatal care, or give birth in unhygienic surroundings. In the industrialised world, there are relatively few newborn deaths.

During the past two decades, child deaths have been decreasing. Two million fewer children died in 1999 than a decade earlier. But in some countries, the rates of decrease seem to be slowing down, and in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa child mortality is actually increasing and one in five children still die before the age of five. UNICEF reports that almost 100 countries, over 40 in Sub-Saharan Africa, are not on track to reach the goal of two-thirds reduction of the under-five mortality rate by 2015.

### 5. Girls who lose their mothers

The experience of birth can be a death sentence for many women. Every minute of every hour of every day, a woman meets her death during pregnancy or childbirth. An estimated 529,000 – 585,000 women<sup>30</sup> (no-one knows quite how many) die unnecessarily each year from pregnancy-related causes.

*Weighing time in Senegal.*

The survival of a child or infant is closely related to the survival and well being of their mother. A study in Kenya found that when a mother dies, only one-third of babies who survived the delivery were alive and healthy a year later.<sup>31</sup> This pattern is repeated elsewhere, and is especially true of girl babies who are more likely to be neglected if their mother dies. In South Asia, a girl's chances of dying are increased by 400 per cent if her mother dies.<sup>32</sup>

It also has an impact on the other female children in the family, as older female siblings are pulled out of school to look after the home if their mother dies in childbirth.

Many maternal deaths are the result of illegal abortions or lack of access to family planning. It is estimated that preventing unintended pregnancies through access to family planning could avert 20 to 35 per cent of maternal deaths. This would save the lives of more than 100,000 mothers a year and consequently many of their young children too.<sup>34</sup>

### 6. Girls who become mothers

Pregnancy is the leading cause of death in young women aged 15-19. And the youngest mothers-to-be are the most vulnerable.<sup>35</sup> Young women, who have been married early and whose bodies are still not ready for them to become mothers, are especially at risk, as are their babies.

This is what happened to Amadou's sister, Khadja, in Mali:

*“Khadja was my older sister. She died two years ago. She wasn't even 20 years old... She was only 14 years when she married but all the girls in our community marry very young... As the pregnancy advanced, my sister's husband wanted her to rest but my aunt refused, saying that Khadja was not the only woman who ever got pregnant. One day her waters broke when she was splitting wood. She carried on as if nothing had happened because she didn't understand what this meant. A couple of days later, Khadja had horrible pains. We did not take*

A woman's lifetime risk of maternal death, by country <sup>33</sup>			
Top 10		Bottom 10	
Sweden	1 in 29,800	Sierra Leone	1 in 6
Slovakia	1 in 19,800	Angola	1 in 7
Austria	1 in 16,000	Malawi	1 in 7
Denmark	1 in 9,800	Niger	1 in 7
Canada	1 in 8,700	Sudan	1 in 7
Finland	1 in 8,200	Mali	1 in 10
Germany	1 in 8,000	Rwanda	1 in 10
Japan	1 in 6,000	Tanzania	1 in 10
Kuwait	1 in 6,000	Chad	1 in 11
Serbia and Montenegro	1 in 4,500	Burkina Faso	1 in 12
		Burundi	1 in 12

Save the Children, 2006. State of the World's Mothers. "Saving the Lives of Mothers and Newborns"

*her to the hospital, which was far from the village. She died two days later, without anyone trying anything to save her. I think that the baby died inside her. My mother said this must have been meant to be, but deep down she has never accepted it and she still suffers.”*  
Amadou, Mali<sup>36</sup>

A Population Reference Bureau report from 2006 states the following about early pregnancy: “The highest proportion of births among young women occurs in Sub-Saharan Africa, where more than one in every four young women has a child by age 18. In South-Central and Southeast Asia, the odds are similar; while in Latin America, Western Asia, and North Africa, the chances of becoming a mother at a young age are much lower. For men, parenthood before age 18 is very rare in all regions.”<sup>37</sup>

#### Early pregnancy can kill<sup>38</sup>

- 70,000 teenage girls in the developing world die from the complications of childbirth and pregnancy each year
- Girls aged 15-19 who get pregnant are twice as likely to die from pregnancy and childbirth than older women
- A study in Bangladesh shows that girls who become mothers between 10 and 14 are more than five times more likely to die than those aged 20 – 24



- **Babies born to adolescent girls have a 50 per cent higher chance of dying before their first birthday than babies born to women in their twenties**

Chapter 4 – *Health* goes into more detail on the subject of girls’ reproductive health.

## 7. Under fives, under threat – and especially if they are girls

One out of every four children under five is underweight.<sup>39</sup> Seventy-three per cent of these live in just 10 countries. Many suffer from vitamin A and iodine deficiency. In India, under-nutrition is the underlying cause for about 50 per cent of the 2.1 million deaths of children under five each year.<sup>40</sup> The numbers of girls and boys under five who are underweight is similar in all regions except South Asia, where 47 per cent of girls are underweight compared to 44 per cent of boys.<sup>41</sup>

### The taste of watermelon

Seven-year-old Rahera, from Afghanistan, eats her breakfast of bread every morning. The loaf must last three days for her family of five. At school she looks forward to a small pack of 12 biscuits from which she eats six and saves the rest for her two younger brothers. Rahera goes home for lunch, which is bread and a cup of tea. In the evening the family eats dinner, which is usually bread with some oil, and yoghurt with a little salt. Three times a week the family buys two glasses of yoghurt. When they have extra cash, they buy some onions. In summer they twice enjoyed a special treat – watermelon.<sup>42</sup>

It is clear from the statistics (where they exist) that girls are more likely to die of malnutrition than boys. For example, in Ecuador (2000), for every 69 boys aged 1-4 who died due to malnutrition, 91 girls died of the same cause; in Peru (2000), the ratio was 99:110 (boys: girls); in El Salvador (1999), the ratio is 12:12. In Uruguay, in 2000, four boys to every seven

girls died from nutritional deficiencies.<sup>43</sup>

In Bangladesh, a baby girl is fed less and lower quality food than a boy. Girls have an 11 per cent higher under-five mortality rate than boys.<sup>44</sup> In Pakistan, 12 per cent more girls than boys die between the ages of one and four.<sup>45</sup> In India, girls are breast fed for shorter periods than boys; they are taken to fewer medical consultations, and often very late, or not at all, to hospitals; this is so especially in north India.<sup>46</sup>

Comprehensive support for the poorest families has had a positive, and in some cases unintended, effect on nourishment and health of young girls. India’s Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), the world’s largest integrated early childhood programme, focuses on millions of expectant and nursing mothers, and children under the age of six. The programme provides a package of services including supplementary nutrition, pre-school education, immunisation, health check-up, referral services and nutrition and health education. There is emerging evidence of its positive impact on the nutritional status of children who benefit from the programme.



*Big lunch for small girl in Niger. But in many parts of the world girls are fed less than boys and are malnourished.*

## 8. What still needs to be done?

Child mortality, maternal health and poverty are all high up the agenda of the Millennium Development Goals. The right to survival is enshrined in many international agreements signed by governments, including the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Because of this, there are many different programmes that are trying to tackle these issues. Many of the interventions are simple and not costly. For example, recent research in the British medical journal *The Lancet* showed that approximately 41 per cent of under five deaths and 72 per cent of neonatal deaths could be prevented each year with simple interventions at the right time and in the right place.<sup>47</sup>

But there is very little research on the specific situation of girls. We know about the ‘missing’ girls, and that girl babies are less likely to receive proper care than boys, but it is very difficult to find statistics in this area that differentiate girls from boys. For example, research has shown that mass immunisation campaigns rarely include separate statistics on girls and boys. Although there are some disaggregated statistics according to sex for under five mortality rates, these are not generally included in global reports. These statistics are essential in order to target programmes more effectively for both girls and boys.

As is clear from the examples of positive action in this chapter, some of the ways to counter infant and maternal mortality do work and are relatively cheap.

### Priority areas for action on girls are:

- Ensuring that all mothers-to-be, including young mothers, have adequate nutrition and access to clean water, good antenatal care, safe delivery, and good neonatal and postnatal care
- Ending sex selection before birth and female infanticide
- Promoting birth registration in order to ensure that girls can access the services they are entitled to
- Ensuring equal care, stimulation and nutrition of girls while they are under five

- **The poorest and most vulnerable families could benefit from a small and regular injection of cash directly into the hands of mothers or grandmothers. This could potentially impact positively on the welfare of girls**

Change will come from promoting programmes that change attitudes towards the girl child, ensuring that her status is equal to that of a boy and that she is valued and supported in both the family and the community, and therefore inherently less at risk of female foeticide, malnutrition, and general emotional and physical neglect.

## 9. Girls’ voices

*“I wish I had not married so young and had babies so young. For me it is too late now, but my message to all teenage girls is do not marry before age 20 and wait to have children until you are 22 – that is the right age for childbearing, when a woman is mature and can look after herself and her baby.”*

Ganga, aged 19, Nepal<sup>48</sup>

*“I don’t want to get married and have children, at least not anytime soon... I want to work and study. I don’t want to be like another girl I know who is 13 years old and already pregnant.”*

Yuleni, aged 13, Venezuela<sup>49</sup>

*“I lost my first baby during pregnancy because I always had to carry very heavy objects. Now I am in classes that teach us how to keep our pregnancy, how to be healthy, how to eat a well-balanced diet and how to get pre-natal care regularly. I am learning to schedule my chores to decrease the daily workload. I can also identify the signs of a high-risk pregnancy to avoid losing my second baby.”*

Safa, aged 18, Egypt<sup>50</sup>



# Family life

## Girls spend much more time on domestic, non-economic work than boys, and have less time for school and play

### Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Preamble to the Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises that: “the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.”

#### Article 19

1. States Parties shall take appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any person who has the care of the child.

### 1. Introduction

*“My parents used to think that I was their property. They used to abuse me, using words which I cannot repeat without making me cry.”*

13-year-old Bangladeshi girl.<sup>1</sup>

*“I am the one who does all the housework... I do the cooking and take care of the household items. [My brother] just eats and goes outside to play.”*

10-year-old Ethiopian girl<sup>2</sup>

The family is the place where children are meant to feel safe, and where they learn how to grow into mature and responsible adults, where they form their first relationships and hopefully follow the positive role models shown by their parents. It is here too where they learn the skills of growing up in our modern and globalised world.

But it is also the place where millions of children, especially girls, face violence and abuse, and where girls are socialised to believe that they have a lower status and fewer rights than their brothers.

This has consequences for all areas of a girl's life and continues into womanhood. She is less likely to go to school, and more likely to work longer hours than a boy. She has less time for play, which has been recognised as a right for all children. She may be subject to female genital cutting and early marriage.

None of this will change unless attitudes towards girls change. For this to happen, boys



need to see girls as equals, not as inferior beings. And their families need to treat them as equal too.

**“I never ever understand why boys and girls are not equal to each other. In rural areas elders think that girls are born to give birth and to marry and for cleaning the house. Girls who live in rural areas... are not sent to schools. Their parents are not aware of the changing world yet.”**  
Girl, aged 15, Turkey.<sup>3</sup>

2. Life in the home

**“We are five children, two older boys and three younger girls. But we the younger sisters are the housemaids every Saturday and Sunday while our two older brothers have no work during weekends because they thought that as boys, they have no responsibility to do household chores.”**  
Barbie, aged 15, Philippines.<sup>4</sup>

Discrimination against girls within the family is probably the most difficult of all to deal with. It is also the foundation of the deep-rooted belief that girls are somehow of less value than boys. As it happens within the home, it is often hidden, and almost impossible to legislate for. We have seen in the previous chapter that such discrimination begins at birth or before, and continues throughout a girl’s life and into womanhood. It is the bedrock on which other forms of discrimination are built and from which violence, including violence in the home, stems. There is evidence that by the age of five or even earlier, both girls and boys have internalised the gender roles they are expected to play and the status that this gives – or does not give – them within the family and the wider community.<sup>5</sup>

In many countries, a girl begins her domestic duties at a very young age; duties that a boy is simply not expected to undertake. These are often arduous, fetching or carrying water from many miles away, pounding rice or maize, sweeping, cleaning, looking after siblings from early morning until late at night. In South Asia,



Girls in Pakistan spend much more time on domestic work than boys, especially if they are not enrolled in school.

women and girls spend three to five hours more than men in a week on activities such as fetching wood and carrying water, and between 20 and 30 hours a week more on housework. Another study of a number of countries in the South, including Kenya, South Africa, Pakistan and India found that “girls spend much more time than boys on non-economic work, and these differences become substantial among those who are not enrolled in school”. It also noted that: “Young men in urban Pakistan and urban India and in rural Kenya appear to spend little time performing domestic chores whether or not they are in school.”<sup>6</sup> This domestic labour on the part of girls and young women is often not counted as ‘work’ – and yet in the 1990s a study in Australia suggested that the value of such ‘domestic’ work is equivalent to 58 per cent of GDP.<sup>7</sup>

In many parts of the world, girls have very few opportunities to make decisions about their own lives. They often have little dialogue with their parents, and are told what to do and when to do it first by their fathers (and sometimes their brothers) and then by their husbands. The men in the family control their time and their lives. A study in Egypt showed that adolescent girls “have much less free time, are much less mobile, much less likely to earn a wage, and have heavier domestic responsibilities” than boys.<sup>8</sup> It found that such attitudes did not vary significantly by socio-economic background, or

Daily timetable from the Gambia (data from 1999)<sup>12</sup>

Time	Girl not in school	Girl in school	Boy in school
6 AM	Rises, bathes, prays	Same	
7 AM	Sweeps compound, fetches water, washes dishes	Same	Rises, bathes, prays, revises lessons
9 AM	Cooks lunch	Goes to school	Goes to school
9:30 AM	Takes lunch to mother on farm, works on farm	In school	In school
2 PM	Working on farm	School day ends, lunch in school, extra studies until 6 PM	Same, if studies end early, plays football
6 PM	Working on farm	Takes food to mother on farm, helps her	Fetches water, bathes
7 PM	Returns home, cooks dinner	Cooks dinner, bathes	Various (play, study)
8 PM	Dinner, washes dishes	Dinner, washes dishes	
9-11 PM	Various (rests, plays, talks to friends, does more housework)	Goes to teacher for extra studies	Goes to teacher for extra studies
12 AM	Goes to sleep	Goes to sleep	Goes to sleep

Kane, E. and M. O'Reilly deBrun. 1993. Bitter seeds. (Draft). Washington, DC: World Bank.

decrease with increased schooling.<sup>9</sup> Evidence from Nepal, Peru and Zimbabwe demonstrates that girls also have less school time than boys.<sup>10</sup> Girls also tend to spend longer hours than boys on all work activities regardless of age.<sup>11</sup>

It is not surprising then that in many countries, girls have less time than boys to play or visit friends.

Even if they have the time, girls are often not allowed the same mobility outside the home or compound as boys. In Burkina Faso, for

example, a mapping exercise with three groups of adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19 – unmarried girls, married girls, and unmarried boys – showed that married adolescent girls had very few places outside the home where they were able to go and very little free time.<sup>13</sup> The few women’s organisations were for adult women only. The exercise noted that: “Spaces for leisure activities are considered essential for boys’ development to help them become well-rounded and happy individuals; these spaces

are considered hazardous and inappropriate for married or unmarried adolescent girls.”<sup>14</sup>

Lack of female participation in sport is not just a Southern phenomenon. A report from the Harvard School of Public Health shows how girls in Massachusetts fail to participate in school sports, despite the fact that sex discrimination in school athletics is against the law. Only 36 per cent of Boston high school girls participated in one or more sports teams in 2001, compared to 55 per cent of high school boys. Statewide, 50 per cent of high school girls participated in one or more sports teams in 2001, compared with 58 per cent of high school boys. The figures were lower for African American and Hispanic girls than for white girls – 37 per cent of African Americans, 28 per cent of Hispanic girls, and 54 per cent of white girls. The report notes the adverse health effects of this lack of participation, including obesity (see also Chapter 4 – *Health* in this report).<sup>15</sup>

In some areas, however, the situation is slowly beginning to change. In Kenya, the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) is a project which aims to link sports with environmental clean-ups, AIDS prevention, leadership training and other community service activities involving approximately 20,000 young people.<sup>16</sup> Part of its programme is to encourage girls to take part in sports as a way not just of exercising but also of occupying public space. When the girls’ programme began in 1996, it faced three main problems. First, many boys in MYSA didn’t think girls could play football. Second, most girls didn’t believe they could play football and third, their mothers, often the only income earner in their families, didn’t want their daughters playing football because they needed their help at home. Slowly, these obstacles were overcome and today there are over 3,500 girls playing on 250 teams in over 40 MYSA girls’ leagues. MYSA girls excel both nationally and internationally in football tournaments and in 2002 the first professional women’s team was formed. This has given many girls greater confidence in other areas of their life. As one participant said: “Before playing football I was fearful; now I am

not because I am used to mixing with people and I know what is good and what is bad.”<sup>17</sup>

Things are slowly changing in other parts of the world as well. A young Bangladeshi girl said: “In the past, a village girl did not have any right to talk about herself. Today, she can talk with her parents and also negotiate with them. She can say if they are doing something wrong.”

### 3. Child-headed households

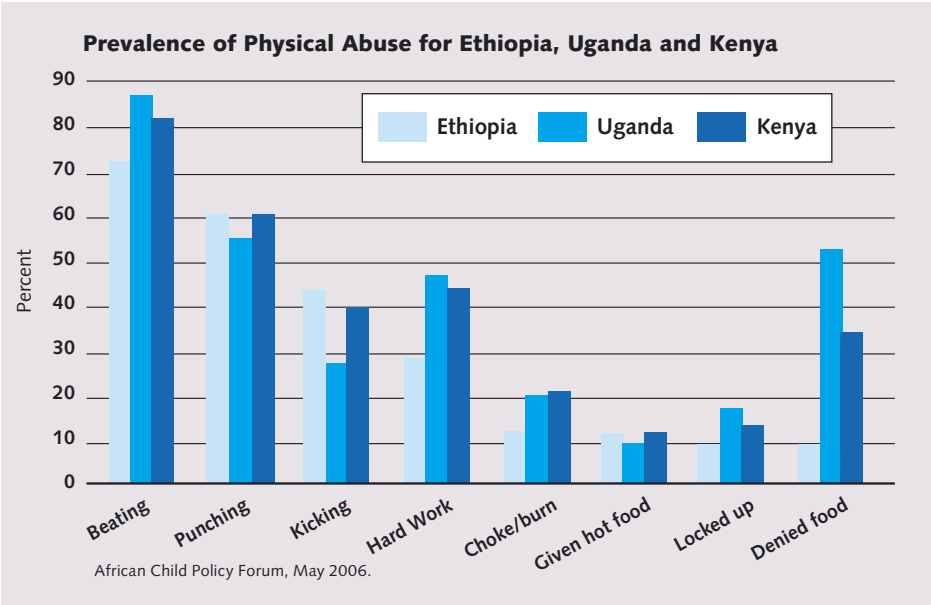
There tends to be an assumption that most households are headed by two parents, but increasingly there are many other combinations, including single parent households, those where a grandparent is in charge and those which are headed by children because their parents have died or left. This has a huge psychological effect on the children who have survived or remain.

*“I find it very difficult at school because of the way I feel now. When I am in class I don’t feel so attentive because my parents are always on my mind. I feel very sad that I don’t have them in my life any more.”*

Gather, aged 16, Uganda.<sup>18</sup>

AIDS will have orphaned many of these children. More than 80 per cent of these are in Sub-Saharan Africa, where by 2010 there will be an estimated 50 million orphaned children, and more than a third will have lost one or both parents to AIDS.<sup>19</sup> In these cases, it is usually the eldest girl who is responsible for the home and for younger siblings and she is likely to have had to drop out of school. Girls in particular face the challenge of offers of support from older men, evidenced as a major risk factor in HIV infection in itself.<sup>20</sup>

“If we lose our parents, we children feel very miserable, we have no support. In terms of getting support, there are older men who are HIV positive who will give some support for something. For example, they can pay for a term’s school fees but the time is going to come when they say: ‘Unless you become my wife, you are not going to continue with school.’” Prossy, aged 16, Uganda.<sup>21</sup>



Children orphaned by AIDS are also likely to suffer stigma and discrimination from other members of the community and may have HIV themselves.

“If you are an orphan, you don’t have money to buy clothes, to pay rent for where you live, or to buy food, and you have young sisters and brothers to look after. You become the father and mother of the house.” Jamalie, aged 14, Uganda.<sup>22</sup>

Thankfully, in other parts of the world, the number of orphans is dropping. In Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, orphan numbers have dropped by around a tenth since 1990.<sup>23</sup>

### 4. Violence in the home

#### Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 19

- States Parties shall take appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any person who has the care of the child.

*“Those who abuse children should be mercilessly punished because they take the happiness of a pure human being, who has no fault for what happened.”*

Girl, Romania<sup>24</sup>

Violence against women and girls, just in the context of going about their daily lives, is widespread. At least one in three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime.<sup>25</sup> In 1993, the World Bank reported that women aged between 15 and 44 “lose more Discounted Health Years of Life to rape and domestic violence than to breast cancer, cervical cancer, obstructed labour, heart disease, AIDS, respiratory infections, motor vehicle accidents or war.”<sup>26</sup> (See chapter 6 – *Girls in exceptionally difficult circumstances*).

Studies estimate that between 20 and 50 per cent of girls and women have experienced violence at the hands of an intimate family member.<sup>27</sup> Half the women who die from homicides are killed by their current or former husbands or partners. In the UK, this is two women each week. In South Africa, a woman is killed by a husband or partner every six hours.<sup>28</sup> Much higher numbers have experienced psychological violence such as bullying or





intimidation, or have witnessed another member of the family, usually their mother, being attacked.<sup>29</sup>

The United Nations involved young people from all over the world in a report on Violence Against Children, published in 2006.<sup>30</sup> This and other surveys from around the world suggest that physical violence against children is also widespread. A review of research on physical victimisation of children in the Republic of Korea found that kicking, choking and biting by parents are alarmingly common with a “high rate of physical injury.”<sup>31</sup> Once again, it is girls that are least able to defend themselves, not just because they are less physically strong but also because they are conditioned to bow to authority.

While it is difficult to find statistics for girls under 18, a recent United Nations report, *Behind Closed Doors: The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children* estimated that “as many as 275 million children may be exposed to violence in the home” and that millions more are likely to be affected.<sup>32</sup> Girls are kept at home for protection, but it is at home that they may face the greatest risks of violence. In Costa Rica, a study carried

out by the Ministry of Health in 2004 indicated that incest was the cause of pregnancy for 95 per cent of girls under 15 years of age.<sup>33</sup> (See Chapter 4 – *Health*, and Chapter 6 – *Girls in exceptionally difficult circumstances*).

In Africa, one study in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda identified a high level of abuse of girls, generally by their mother or stepmother.<sup>34</sup> This included a number of behaviours such as caning, slapping, pinching, burning and overworking. Beating emerged as the most frequent form of violence, while giving hot and bitter food was the least common. In Uganda, 85.8 per cent of girls say they have been beaten, followed by Kenya at 80.8 per cent and then Ethiopia at 71.1 per cent. Punching and hitting the girl is the second most prevalent form of physical abuse with rates in Ethiopia and Kenya at 59.5 per cent.<sup>35</sup>

Research suggests that girls who witness domestic violence or who are abused as children are also likely to be future victims of domestic violence. And those who are particularly vulnerable, such as girls with disabilities, are even more likely to be in danger of violence and abuse.<sup>36</sup>

*For a girl, like this one in Cambodia, work begins at a young age.*

### Rosa's story

Rosa\* comes from East Timor. She only went to school for two years because she had to help her mother, stepfather and five stepsisters at home. “I wanted to play with my friends around the house but I couldn’t as I was busy with housework helping Mother look after my stepsisters, collecting firewood, cooking, washing and feeding the pigs. I was scared of being beaten if my stepfather found me playing.”

Rosa shared a bedroom with her sisters. One night, when she was 13, she woke at midnight: “I felt someone pulling at my skirt button. I found that my stepfather was naked and lying next to me. After some time I managed to run out of the bedroom and my mother awoke and asked what had happened. My stepfather denied everything but eventually admitted his fault.”

The tradition was that her stepfather should give her a pig to make up for what he had done. One day, she found he had sold her pig. But when she complained, he beat her and chased her away. She went to her cousin’s house, but found that she was also in danger there. Her cousin beat her with an electric cable.

Rosa moved on to her godmother’s house but also faced mistreatment. She tried to commit suicide by eating camphor. Her godmother took her to the local clinic. There, Rosa was referred to Fokupers, an East Timorese Women’s NGO, that has been helping women and children affected by violence and abuse. She went to a house called Mahon, ‘Place of Shade’, where she was given counselling, play therapy, dancing, singing and life-skills training. The centre is now working with Rosa to help her move back to her family home.<sup>37</sup>

\* Her name has been changed to protect her identity.

Violence against girls is often of a sexual nature. Because of girls’ status in society, even if they have the courage to report the abuse, they may not be believed, as this girl, aged 13, from Bangladesh, reports: “If one of the girls is sexually abused by a relative and we report the wrongdoings, the parents and adults in the family do not believe us. We are scolded and called ‘bad girls’ and even beaten up for making up such ‘nasty stories’. If a girl talks about sexual abuse at home, she can be thrown out of home or she is treated so badly that she has to run away from home.”<sup>38</sup>

Emerging evidence from Plan’s research in five West African countries – Benin, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Niger and Senegal – shows that violence against girls is commonplace and much of it is sexual in nature. Girls’ status at the bottom of the social structure exposes them to more violence, with the poorest girls from fragmented family settings experiencing the most. Girls have reported being subjected to insults, harassment, and in some cases rape at the hands of the boys, young men and adult men around them.<sup>39</sup>

The Save the Children Alliance has involved children in a study related to sexual abuse. These are the recommendations of the young people from that study:

### Ten recommendations from children against child sexual abuse<sup>40</sup>

1. Sexual abuse is bad and should not happen.
2. Tell them to stop – it is hard to disclose.
3. It is too difficult to get out of sexual exploitation and exit the sex trade.
4. Listen to me and believe what I tell you.
5. Talk to me and be there if I need you.
6. I need to feel safe and protected and decide how my case is to be handled.
7. Love me, support me – we know what we need.
8. Help me get things straight.
9. Let my abuser face up to what he or she has done.
10. Don’t put a label on me and let me go on with my life.

## 5. Sexuality

It is a common belief that a family's reputation sinks or swims on the basis of its daughters' sexuality. Preserving her virginity until marriage is key to the honour of the whole family and to her economic as well as her social worth, hence the age-old practice of hanging out the sheets for all to see the blood from the breaking of a virgin's hymen after the wedding night.

In some cultures, girls who are believed to have infringed family and social codes have been murdered by the male members of their family. This is sometimes known as 'honour killing'. A girl may have a boyfriend that her family does not approve of, she may refuse to have an arranged marriage, she may be a lesbian, or she may have been raped. Such killings have been reported in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan, Turkey and Uganda and Northern countries such as Britain or Sweden, into which people from these countries have immigrated.

Girls growing up in most parts of the world are expected to conform to certain norms which have to do with gender and sexuality. Their sexuality is also expected to develop in such a way that they will become sexually attracted to members of the opposite sex, not their own. But a significant proportion of the girls growing up around the world find that they do not fit either or both of the above expectations.

For many lesbian girls homophobia begins at home. A teenager from Croatia reports: "When my parents assumed I might be non-straight, they said it wasn't normal and I was a sick liar living a double life. Even though I had always been a perfect daughter, they said they were deeply disappointed in me. Sorry I was born. They said they couldn't look at me or talk to me ever again if I was lesbian or bisexual – that I would not be their daughter anymore. Then I denied it all and moved on with my 'double life' in favour of keeping peace in the family."<sup>18</sup>

Concealment is a common survival strategy. And not without reason. In some cases disclosure leads to being forced out of the

family home, or threats of violence, rape and even death. It is not uncommon for families to mete out fierce punishment to youngsters who do not follow the 'correct' gender path. Such violence is often justified as being for the girl's own good. Rape is sometimes used against those who show no interest in getting married. This is what happened to this young Zimbabwean in her family home under her parents' orders: "They locked me in a room and brought him everyday to rape me so I would fall pregnant and be forced to marry him. They did this to me until I was pregnant."<sup>42</sup>

Not all the stories are bad, not all families unsupportive. "I am lucky my family loves me, knowing that other families do not accept their own flesh and blood because of their sexuality," says one teenage contributor to a website for young lesbians. "I am happy that my family sticks together no matter what!"<sup>43</sup>

Others may find the process of family acceptance is long – but they get there in the end. One young lesbian of Chinese-Malaysian origin tells the story of how at the age of 15, she tried to 'come out' to her parents but they kept telling her she just needed to 'meet the right man'. Finally, several years later, and after she had completed university, she tried again. She said to her mother: "I know that my sexuality will spoil your reputation among relatives and your friends. But mom, I love you. Tell me, do you want me to get married with a man just to make you happy? Or do you want me to find my own destiny?" Since then, she says, her mother has accepted the fact that her daughter is a lesbian.<sup>44</sup>

## 6. Female genital cutting

### African Charter On The Rights and Welfare Of The Child

Article 21: Protection against harmful social and cultural practices

1. States Parties to the present Charter shall take appropriate measures to eliminate harmful social and cultural practices affecting the welfare, dignity, normal growth and development of the child in particular:

- (a) those customs and practices prejudicial to the health or life of the child; and
- (b) the customs and practices discriminatory to the child on the grounds of sex or status.

About 140 million girls have undergone female genital cutting and two million are subjected to it every year. Several basic human rights are violated by the procedure of female genital cutting, primarily the right of physical integrity, the right to freedom from violence and discrimination, and in most severe cases, the right of life.

Female genital cutting (FGC), often referred to as female genital mutilation or female circumcision, is an operation to remove part or all of a girl's external genital organs. It is performed on infants and on adult women but mostly on girls between the ages of four and 12. There is a growing tendency to perform female genital cutting on younger and younger girls.

It is practised in about 28 countries in Africa and some minority groups in Asia. In some countries, like Somalia and Guinea, 98 per cent of women have undergone female genital cutting. In others, like the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda, it affects only five per cent of women. There are also a number of immigrant women in Europe, Canada, and the United States who have undergone FGC.<sup>45</sup>

### Types of female genital cutting

**Type I – the removal of the clitoris**

**Type II – the removal of the clitoris and surrounding labia**

**Type III – known as infibulation, where all external genitalia are removed and the opening is stitched so that only a small hole remains**

**Type IV – a variety of unclassified traumatic procedures of cutting, stretching, or piercing performed on the external genitalia, such as cauterization by burning of the clitoris and surrounding tissue or scraping of tissue surrounding the opening of the vagina**

About 15 per cent of all women who have undergone FGC have been infibulated. In Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan almost all are of this type.<sup>46</sup>

Female genital cutting is a traditional practice that is believed to keep women chaste and make girls marriageable. If a girl is not cut, her future prospects as a wife and mother are in jeopardy. One woman in a village in Egypt was asked why people supported the practice. She said: "It is a norm that has to be fulfilled. The girl must be circumcised to protect her honour and the family's honour, especially now that girls go to universities outside the village, and may be exposed to lots of intimidating situations."<sup>47</sup>

FGC is an irreversible act which violates the rights of girls and women and is an infringement of their right to physical integrity. It often leads to a wide range of complications. While the procedure is being performed it involves severe pain and a risk of haemorrhage that can lead to shock and even the death of the girl involved. There are also reports of abscesses, ulcers, delayed healing, septicemia, tetanus, and gangrene. Long-term complications include urinary infections; obstruction of menstrual flow leading to frequent reproductive tract infections and infertility; and prolonged and obstructed labour. One study, carried out by the World Health Organisation involving 30,000 African women, found that excised women were 31 per cent more likely to have a caesarean delivery, had a 66 per cent higher chance of having a baby that needed to be revived and were 55 per cent more likely to have a child who died before or after birth.<sup>48</sup>

"As a result of this study we have, for the first time, evidence that deliveries among women who have been subject to FGM [FGC] are significantly more likely to be complicated and dangerous," said Joy Phumaphi, WHO assistant director-general for family and community health.<sup>49</sup> In addition to the physical complications, there are psychological and sexual impacts including severe trauma, depression or frigidity.

**Circumcision celebrations in the Gambia**  
It always happens on a Monday. On the Sunday, the drumming and dancing go on all night. The mother of one of the little girls, aged six, cradles her child's head gently on her lap and fans her against the heat. The baby and five girls are spoiled and feted, given new dresses. The mothers tell the children – those who are old enough to enjoy stories – that where they are going there is a tree which has money instead of leaves.

But at the heart of the party, as at the centre of all good stories, there is pain. For the little girls are going to be 'circumcised'. In her compound, where only the girls and their grandmothers are able to enter, the circumciser, ngaman, will take a razor, and cut off the children's clitorises and labia minora with a razor blade.

"My husband and I didn't want our daughters to be circumcised," says one woman, "but I knew they would be bullied and ostracized if they were not. I felt I had no choice. Everyone would know if they had not had it done, and if they came too near a compound where the circumcision was being performed, they could be brought in and circumcised then and there against their will."<sup>50</sup>

In many countries, FGC is considered to be an important part of culture, and attempts by outsiders to come in and ban the practice have been seen as an attack on culture or religious practices. Programmes that have been implemented by local organisations and NGOs, more engaged with the culture and able to communicate in local languages, have proven to be more successful.

Legislation can also help – 14 countries in Africa – Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania, and Togo – have enacted laws against FGC. But these need to be enforced. In most of the countries where legislation exists, it has not

helped to bring down the prevalence of FGC substantially. Clearly, a specific law prohibiting the practice is necessary, but it is not enough. The law by itself has limited reach. It is only one important element creating a favourable environment for change. The risk of FGC being conducted clandestinely can be an unwanted side effect of legislation.

#### **Legal Protection Against FGC – When the Law Works<sup>51</sup>**

Community based actions are strengthened because the law

- gives back up and justification to local partners who can intervene as spokespeople of the government
- protects non-excised girls and helps families to resist the social pressure to have them excised
- demonstrates formally that the abolition of excision is a governmental objective and not an initiative of 'outsiders'
- hinders conservatives such as religious leaders from broadcasting pro-excision opinions through the media

In Burkina Faso, the law is rigorously applied. Between 1996 and 2005 there were more than 400 convictions.<sup>52</sup> Those convicted face a fine of up to \$1,800 and a possible prison sentence of up to three years. The Government has also undertaken public information campaigns and introduced the topic into the school curriculum. A telephone helpline has been set up and there are initiatives to find alternative employment for women who carried out the practice. As a result of all this, the number of girls undergoing FGC is dropping. A survey carried out in 1999 showed that 63.7 per cent of women wanted the practice to end.<sup>53</sup> The government in Burkina Faso has managed to create an environment that is conducive to change on this very difficult issue.

There have also been Africa-wide initiatives against FGC. In February 2003, for example, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against women initiated the Inter-African Committee,

which held a conference in Addis Ababa on zero tolerance for FGC.

And local people have introduced alternatives to FGC. They still hold an initiation ceremony, which ensures that the girl is welcomed into society, but she is no longer cut. This also means that those who practice FGC could have an alternative means of earning a living. In Kenya, for example, Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Association, a local organisation, has designed an alternative rite of passage known as 'Cutting Through Words'. The first 'Cutting Through Words' ceremony took place in the Kenyan village of Gatunga, east of Nairobi, in 1996. Using song and dance, girls appealed to their elders to stop the cutting. They prepared an alternative 'coming of age' celebration which included spending a week in seclusion, visited only by female relatives who taught them the skills they would need as women. Similar ceremonies have now been adopted by a number of other Kenyan communities, including the Maasai in the Rift Valley Province and the Abagusii of Western Kenya.<sup>54</sup>

But in some countries, there is no real progress as the practice is portrayed as a religious duty. In Egypt, it has risen by 0.3 per cent to 97.3 per cent, in Sudan from 89 to 90 per cent and in Côte d'Ivoire it has increased two per cent to 44.5 per cent.<sup>55</sup>

Several Northern countries have legislation against FGC including Sweden, Norway, Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom. In a landmark case in the UK in October 2006, a young woman from Sierra Leone was allowed to claim asylum based on the fact that she would face FGC if she went home.<sup>56</sup>

#### **Zainab's case**

Zainab Fornah, aged 19, had her asylum appeal upheld by the law lords in Britain on the grounds that she was fleeing female genital cutting. The unanimous ruling found that she should be granted asylum because as a Sierra Leonean woman she belonged to a "particular social group" in danger of persecution

under refugee law. Ms Fornah fled Sierra Leone in 2003 aged 15 after her family was killed and she was repeatedly raped by rebel soldiers in Sierra Leone.<sup>57</sup>

One law lord, Lady Hale of Richmond, said the decision was significant for the "many other women in the world who flee similar fears". The Guardian newspaper said: "The judgment may prove relevant to female genital mutilation cases relating to other countries, as well other forms of gender persecution defended on the grounds that they constitute a 'cultural' or 'traditional' practice. The ruling comes at the end of a long process and several appeals. Last year, two of three appeal court judges ruled against Ms Fornah, saying that the practice of female genital mutilation – 'however repulsive to most societies outside Sierra Leone' – was accepted 'as traditional and as part of the cultural life' in Sierra Leone."<sup>58</sup>

#### **Marthe's story**

*"When I was seven years old, my mother wanted to send me for excision, but my father who is a pastor refused to do so, she was so confused and unhappy to see her daughter non-excised that she left the house for three months. At that time I was so confused and I did not understand what was happening around my situation, my father kept firm on his decision and I was not excised. Two of my young sisters also are not excised; finally my mother also accepted my father's decision.*

*"Currently I am 18 years old and I have one child. When I got pregnant, people in my community couldn't understand because it was said that if the girl is not excised she can't give birth. I gave birth without difficulty.*

*"Now I am a peer educator in my association where I conduct educative talks with my friends.*

*"When I compare my situation to the excised girls' one, I claim myself very*



*proud and happy to be so and encourage parents not to excise their daughters; I think parents do it by ignorance.”*  
**Marthe**, 18 years old, Guinea<sup>59</sup>

7. Early and forced marriage

“In some of our communities, when a girl starts showing signs of maturity she becomes the focus in that community and the next thing to happen is to initiate her in the secret society without even asking her consent and finally giving her hand in marriage to whoever her family pleases. They don’t consider the age. All they know is that their child is well matured and should be married. Sometimes the men they get married to are much older than their parents in fact, but as tradition demands they just have to obey. Often and again girl children are often forced to marry to chiefs especially if they are beautiful and reside in a village.”  
**Konima**, aged 18, Sierra Leone.<sup>60</sup>

*“To stop this inhuman attitude towards girls, there should be stringent laws against the practice of child marriages, and both the governments and the civil societies should initiate awareness raising campaigns at every community on gender equity and the evil consequences of child marriages.”*  
**B. Savitha**, aged 14, India<sup>61</sup>

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

Article 16  
1. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

Child marriage is defined as “any marriage carried out below the age of 18 years before the girl is physically, psychologically and physiologically ready to shoulder the

responsibilities of marriage and child bearing”.<sup>62</sup> As such young married girls are a unique, though often invisible group.<sup>63</sup> The practice is most common in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, but also occurs in other parts of the world. The numbers of girls who are married are difficult to estimate as so many marriages are not registered, but more than 100 million girls under 18, some as young as 12, are expected to marry over the next decade.<sup>64</sup> The numbers of boys who marry under 18 are much lower.<sup>65</sup>  
A number of international human rights instruments cover early marriage. In addition, most countries have officially declared 18 as the minimum legal age of marriage. But these laws are rarely applied, and few prosecutions are ever brought against those who break the law. In some cases, the only outcome of a lawsuit would in any case declare the marriage invalid, which would leave the young wife with little or no legal protection.

Married girls aged 15-19 <sup>66</sup>	
	Percentage
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	
Dem Rep of Congo	74
Niger	70
Congo	56
Uganda	50
Mali	50
<b>Asia</b>	
Afghanistan	54
Bangladesh	51
Nepal	42
<b>Middle East</b>	
Iraq	28
Syria	25
Yemen	24
<b>Latin America and Caribbean</b>	
Honduras	30
Cuba	29
Guatemala	24
UN Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Marriage Patterns 2000.	



A 15 year old girl gets married in Pakistan. Many from the poorest families are married much younger.

Recent findings from UNFPA and the Population Council show that married girls:<sup>67</sup>

- Are likely to have less education and fewer schooling opportunities than unmarried girls
- Have less mobility than unmarried girls or older married women
- Have less household and economic power than older married women
- Have less exposure to the media than unmarried girls
- Have limited social networks
- May be at greater risk of gender-based violence than women who marry later
- Face greater reproductive health risks than unmarried women and married young women who have already had a child.

Parents may marry their daughter at a young age because it is customary, but also simply because they cannot afford to keep her, and feel that marriage to an older man who has money will give her a better life. A study of five very poor villages in Egypt found young girls being married to much older men from other, oil-rich Middle Eastern countries using marriage

brokers. In West Africa, a UNICEF study shows that poverty is encouraging early marriage even among groups that do not normally practise it. In Eastern Africa, it is seen as an option for girls orphaned by AIDS. Once married, a girl is seen as being protected from harm – in Northern Uganda, young girls are married to militiamen for precisely this reason. In Afghanistan, the uncertainty of war has also led to increasing numbers being married early.<sup>68</sup>

**Early marriage in selected countries<sup>69</sup>**  
**Rajasthan, India** The custom survives of giving very small children away in marriage. On the auspicious day of *Akha Teej*, the mass solemnisation of marriages between young boys and girls is performed. From the parents’ point of view, this is the tried and tested way of organising the passing on of property and wealth within the family. A small but significant proportion of the children involved are under 10, and some are mere toddlers of two and three years old. The girls then go on to live with their husbands when they reach puberty.  
**West Africa** A study by UNICEF in six West African countries showed that 44 per cent of 20 – 24 year old women were married under the age of 15. The need to follow tradition, reinforce ties among or between communities, and protect girls from out-of-wedlock pregnancy were the main reasons given. In the communities studied, all decisions on timing of marriage and choice of spouse were made by the fathers.  
**Bangladesh** Many Bangladeshi girls are married soon after puberty, partly to free their parents from an economic burden and partly to protect the girls’ sexual purity. Where a girl’s family is very poor or she has lost her parents, she may be married as a third or fourth wife to a much older man, to fulfil the role of sexual and domestic servant.  
**Albania** Families in rural areas, reduced to abject poverty by the post-Communist

transition, encourage their daughters to marry early in order to catch potential husbands before they migrate to the cities in search of work, and to avoid the threat of kidnapping on the way to school.

**Niger** A study conducted in a rural area of Niger in 2003 found that 68 per cent of girls were married before their first menstruation, and 52 per cent had a child before they reached the age of 16. Of those who had been married before the age of 16, only 16 per cent had received some education. Those who had married later had a much higher rate of schooling, with 42 per cent having received some education.<sup>70</sup>

#### Lalmuni's story

Marriage in Nepal is a family affair. When 14 year-old Lalmuni's parents decided she should be married, she knew it would be the end of her education. She was also worried about becoming pregnant and giving birth at such a young age. But her parents were adamant: the marriage would go ahead.

In desperation, Lalmuni took her problem to her 'Child Club', one of 600 such clubs around the country. Her friends decided to meet Lalmuni's parents and to persuade them to change their minds. This was a highly unusual step for a group of young girls. Outsiders, especially a group of teenage girls, usually have no say in such matters.

Lalmuni's parents listened to what her friends had to say but were unconvinced. Her father said: "We would have to give a lot of money in dowry if the girl marries at an older age. Are you going to give us this money?" But the girls did not give up. They patiently explained the risks Lalmuni would face through an early marriage. They pointed out that although the family might save some money, this would be at the cost of their daughter's health and education, and it would affect her for the rest of her life. Lalmuni's

parents were profoundly affected by her friends' concern for her well-being. Eventually they changed their minds and let her continue her education. Today, Lalmuni is still attending school and is an active member of the Child Club.<sup>71</sup>

There needs to be legislation by government against early marriage and advocacy and media work on the subject. Parents need to understand the dangers of marrying their daughters too early and both girls and boys should understand their rights. Of course, both women's status in society and poverty are contributory factors to girls' early marriage. One ambitious programme by the local governments of Rajasthan, Karnataka and Haryana states in India aims to increase the value placed on girls by their families and society and thus prevent early marriage. In Haryana, a small sum of money is put into a savings account for a girl at her birth. If she is still unmarried at the age of 18, she can collect the amount plus the years of savings and use it for her dowry.<sup>72</sup>

Ethiopia's revised Family Law and new penal code, enacted in 2003, established explicit punishments for early marriage and other harmful traditional practices. In the Amhara region, a series of Early Marriage Committees has been established, composed of religious leaders, women's associations, Community-Based-Reproductive-Health Agents (CBRHAs), health and village administration officials, parents, teachers, and girls themselves. CBRHAs, girls, and teachers report upcoming early marriages to the committee. The chain of intervention then goes through the department of women's affairs at the district level, which responds with legal action through the police or through representation provided by the Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Association. In some Early Marriage Committees, the community members respond immediately through direct intervention with the parents of both bride and groom, and call in local police if needed. One NGO, Pathfinder, has together with its partners prevented more than 9,000 early marriages in

Amhara region.<sup>73</sup> In Bangladesh, the government offers stipends for girls' school expenses if parents promised to delay their daughters' marriage until at least age 18.<sup>74</sup>

Laws against early marriage are necessary, but they are not always followed. Still more than a fifth of women in the poorest regions of the world already have a child by the time they are 18. In Western and Middle Africa and South Central and South-east Asia, 58 per cent of women are married before they are 18.<sup>75</sup>

## 8. The role of boys and men

*"There is a need to bring change in the attitude of the men-folk and they should treat girls and women equal with boys and men. Girls should get organised in each village and insist on getting equal opportunities for education as well as recreation and in the decision making in the family."*

Vandana, 15 years, India<sup>76</sup>

It is gradually being recognised that life will not change for girls and women unless it also changes for boys and men. When girls face violence at home, it is often from the male members of their families, be they fathers, stepfathers, husbands, brothers or uncles. When they are able to have the courage to stand up for what they want, it is often with the support of an older brother. In many societies, fathers still rule their daughters' lives, deciding whether they can go out, when and to whom they should get married, and how their lives are shaped. Just as girls learn their roles from their mothers and other female members of the family, so boys learn from their fathers and from their peers.

One study in the United States found that culture often has a negative effect on boys. Boys are trained to value their differences from girls and to see these differences as positive. Their findings showed that:

1. Schools are 'anti-boy.' Elementary schools emphasise reading and restrict the activity of young boys, who are generally more active and slower to read than girls. Teachers

often discipline boys more harshly than girls. Sensitivity isn't modelled to boys, so they don't learn it.

2. Fathers tend to demand that their sons act tough, mothers tend to expect boys to be strong and protective and their friends enforce the rule that a boy doesn't cry. And after being taught not to be 'sissies,' boys are then chastised for being insensitive.
3. Boys hear confusing messages, for example, to embrace an androgynous sex role and yet not become too feminine. At the same time, many boys lose the 'chums' of their boyhood as they enter adolescence. For many teenage males, distrust of other boys replaces intimate same-sex friendships, recent research suggests.
4. Media images have become more hyper-masculine – emotionless killing machines, such as Sylvester Stallone, have supplanted strong yet milder heroes like Roy Rogers. Many boys learn to hide behind a 'mask of bravado.'

*Family and fresh air, up in the Ecuadorian Andes.*





5. Boys are often victims of ruthless jeering and insults. Many find that words don't stop the taunting but punches do, because anger is the only emotion that earns them respect.<sup>77</sup>

Addressing these issues for boys will help girls as well. And the same is true for programmes that promote girls' rights. In Pakistan, a project with boy scouts encourages them to take action to promote and protect the rights of others, especially girls. Each boy takes part in training on Meena, a multi-media package developed by UNICEF, and then collects data from 10 households on health, sanitation and the education of their children.<sup>78</sup> In return, they give that household information on a number of issues, including the education of girls. They then monitor progress. If successful, the project will be rolled out to 100,000 households and more than 500,000 people.<sup>79</sup>

In Latin America, where sexist attitudes often make life difficult for girls and force boys to behave in certain ways, Programme H (the Spanish word for men is *hombres*; in Portuguese it is *homens*) works on changing the norms about what it means to be a man. It has been developed with young men from low-income communities in Brazil and Mexico, who are part of the process of change. This is Joao, aged 19: "There's this guy who's a friend of mine, and he had a girlfriend, and she got pregnant and he abandoned her when she was pregnant and he never liked to work, he doesn't do anything, just takes from his mother. My point of view is different. I think about working because I want to have a family, a really good family. I want to be there when they need me, accepting my responsibilities. Even if I were to separate from the mother of my daughter and have another wife, I'm not gonna forget about my daughter. She'll always be the first... But lots of young guys, they don't think about working, just think about stealing, using drugs, smoking. Here that's normal. But not me. I stay away from that, drugs and smoking and stuff. They can think I'm square, so I'll be square then."<sup>80</sup>

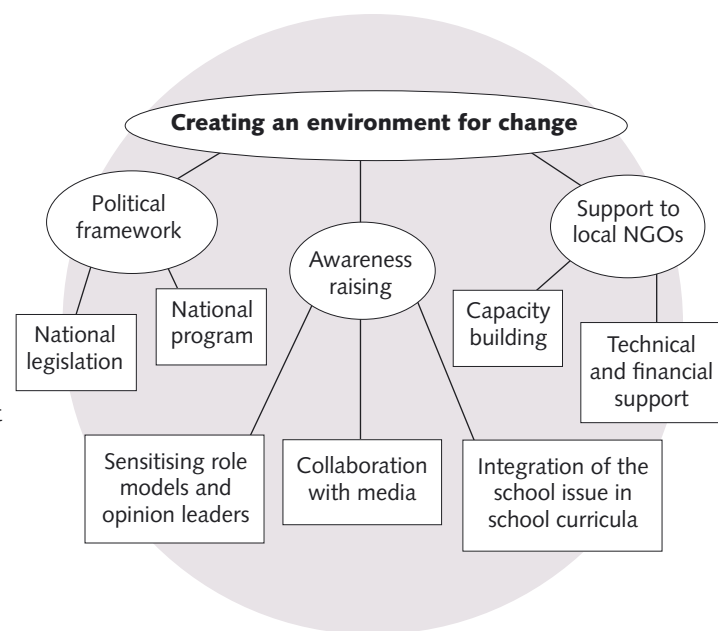
These campaigns also take place in the developed world. The White Ribbon

campaign, where men wear a white ribbon to show their opposition to violence against women, was started 15 years ago and has taken off in Canada and Europe as well as countries like Brazil.

## 9. What still needs to be done?

The many initiatives detailed in this chapter show that on all these issues, steps are being taken to bring about change. But early marriage, female genital cutting and violence against girls in the home are still happening all the time, all over the world. Rights-based legislation which is enforced by government together with a raft of action on public awareness all help to move matters forward. What would have the most effect would be for girls' status in society, and in their own families, to become equal to that of their brothers. This involves attitudinal change.

A recent report from Plan on Female Genital Cutting in West Africa mapped the elements necessary for change on FGC, which would also apply in other challenges faced by girls. It shows that a variety of approaches are needed in order for change to happen:<sup>81</sup>



**So what can enable girls to reach their potential? Conclusions based on evidence in this chapter are that:**

- Programmes in school and in the community which stress the rights and status of girls have succeeded in changing attitudes in the family. These must be for girls and boys alike
- With continued efforts and supportive legislation, female genital cutting can be phased out. As demonstrated in Kenya, it could be replaced with alternative initiation rituals and support for cutters in finding other work
- Despite legislation being in place which bans early marriage, it is not enforced by governments. Likewise where it exists, existing legislation on violence and sexual abuse must be upheld if these violations are to diminish
- Girls and young women say they need safe places to go when they are in danger and the ability to share their situation in confidence

## 10. Girls' voices

*"Every girl child in some corner cries in silence because of marriage in early ages. You may not be among those who cry for freedom, those who wish to study further but are forced to marry an old ugly man for money. But I have seen and faced forced marriage, and I understand how horrible it is. I escaped a forced marriage, because I always went against my parents and society. Sometimes you just need to stand on your own."*

Girl, 20, Sri Lanka<sup>82</sup>

*"When the grandmother came to get the baby for circumcision, we said no. My uncle supported us. The child was their last-born and he said: 'I don't want anything to harm my baby'. That baby is now 12. She still lives with me and she has not been mutilated."*

Sunta Javara, Gambia Committee on Traditional Practices<sup>83</sup>



LIBA TAYLOR

*"We are experts of our own lives. In many ways, we are the victims of violence. As a major right in the UNCRC, participation is our right. We are capable of expressing what is right and what is not and we can even help in implementation and monitoring of the government's work... There are no excuses for violence against children, not even traditional practices and customs."*

Children's Statement on the UN report on Violence against Children, October 2006

*"Parents must bring up their girls as an asset not a liability. They must give her equal rights, opportunities and privileges as the male child. A girl who has been a victim must be supported and needs tremendous care, rehabilitation and counselling."*

Girl, 17, India<sup>84</sup>

Girls and boys come out to play at Kevebakka estate pre-school in Sri Lanka.



# Education

## 62 million girls are not in primary school

# 3



### 1. Introduction: why girls' education?

#### Convention on the Rights of the Child

##### Article 28

1. States Parties recognise the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

- (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
- (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need

##### Article 12

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

##### Article 29

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

(a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential

##### Article 34

States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

#### Millennium Development Goals

##### Goal 2

Achieve universal primary education  
Target: Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling

*"Me and other girls of the community school want to make our future bright. I do not want to see my brothers and sisters experiencing the same hardships that I faced. I have developed confidence in myself. All this has happened due to education. After seeing us, people of our village have become aware about the importance of education. Now those people who were against the education of girls are sending their daughters and sisters to the schools."*

**Nagina Habib**, Community School, Lassan Thakral, Pakistan.<sup>1</sup>

*"School is a good thing. If you go to school, you will become a female teacher, a minister. However many parents say that it*

*is not good to send girls to school... I have many things to do when I come back home even if I am tired. I sweep the floor, I go to buy things for my mother, and I play with my brother. I do not have much time to do my homework."*

**Ballovi Eliane**, aged 10, Couffo District, Benin.<sup>2</sup>

At 72, Mandisina Mawere's girlhood days are long over. But she has made herself a promise: that the girls in her family will have an education. She knows that education is the key to so many other rights for women: "As a young girl, I wasn't allowed to go to school," she said. "Since then I have vowed I would never deprive my daughters of an education and now I am doing the same for my granddaughters."<sup>3</sup>

Mandisina is putting her words into action. She is part of a garden project in Zimbabwe raising money for school fees for children who cannot afford them. She may not have been educated, but she knows just how much she has missed by not going to school and is determined that things will be different for her own daughters and granddaughters.<sup>4</sup>

She is right to think that education makes a huge difference. A host of academic studies, national and international initiatives and projects on the ground have proved the case for girls' education. The education of girls has a significant impact on other areas of a woman's life. Her children are more likely to be healthy and to go to school themselves. For example, children with unschooled mothers are 4.8 times more likely to be out of primary school in Venezuela, 4.4 times more likely in Suriname, and 3.4 times more likely in Guyana. Data shows a striking correlation between under-five mortality rates and the educational level attained by a child's mother, not to mention maternal mortality rates. An educated woman also has a better chance of earning an income herself, which has a positive effect on her family, and therefore on society as a whole. One study in Kenya estimated that crop yields could rise up to 22 per cent if women farmers enjoyed the same education and decision-making authority as men.<sup>5</sup> The whole country

benefits if a girl is educated: studies have shown that as a country's primary enrolment rate for girls increases, so too does its gross domestic product per capita.<sup>6</sup> Not only does a girl's education have an exponential impact on society, education helps the girl for her own sake. It helps her to protect herself from AIDS, exploitation and hazardous child labour. And education is not just a privilege: it is every girl's right.

Kofi Annan, the former United Nations Secretary General, said: "There is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls. If we are to succeed in our efforts to build a more healthy, peaceful and equitable world, the classrooms of the world have to be full of girls as well as boys."<sup>7</sup> The case is clear: so what is being done?

*The World Education Forum has promised to achieve gender equality in education by 2015.*



VALARIE BURTON

**Children's views**

A study for Plan in Pakistan asked children what they thought was important and girls' education came high on the list.<sup>8</sup>

Girls thought that:

- "Parents should be told of the importance of education so that they can have a greater understanding"
- "Girls should be given higher education and they should be loved as much as boys are by their parents. They don't send the girls to school but instead make them do all the housework"
- "Women are confined within the house. There is no life without education. If we study we can do something, if nothing else we can teach our own kids"

Boys too thought girls' education was important:

- "Some people don't let women study; it is their right to study"
- "Every village in Mansehra should have a school so girls and boys can study and have better interaction"
- "Some people think that it's not important for women to be educated, but I think they should be educated. The Holy Qur'an says that it is essential for every man and woman to be educated"

**Promises and commitments**

Recognising the importance of girls' education and the fact that it is a right, the world has made a number of commitments to its promotion over the past two decades. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which came into force in September 1990, says that: "State Parties recognise the right of every child to education, and with a view to achieving the right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity."

The World Conference on Education for All in the same year stressed the importance of girls' education in particular. In 1999, major

non-governmental organisations and teachers and their unions from 150 countries founded the Global Campaign for Education to demand universal education.<sup>9</sup>

Ten years after the CRC came into effect, in 2000, at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, governments promised to:

- Ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
- Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to, and achievement in, basic education of good quality.<sup>10</sup>

This was built on later in the year by the adoption of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which put both gender and education as high priorities. Goal two is to "achieve universal primary education". Goal 3 includes a commitment to "eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015."<sup>11</sup>

There can be no doubt that these combined efforts have borne fruit. Globally, there have been many improvements in education over the last five to ten years. By 2004, 87 out of every 100 children of primary age were enrolled in school. Girls' enrolment has

**Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds, percentage<sup>13</sup>**

	Total	Men	Women
World	87.2	90.4	84.0
Developing Regions	85.0	88.7	81.1
Northern Africa	84.3	89.9	78.4
Sub-Saharan Africa	73.1	78.1	68.4
Latin America and the Caribbean	96.0	95.6	96.4
Eastern Asia	98.9	99.2	98.5
Southern Asia	72.2	80.3	63.3
South-Eastern Asia	96.2	96.5	95.9
Western Asia	91.3	94.9	87.6
Oceania	72.8	74.9	70.5

UN Millennium Development Goals Indicators, 2006



increased faster than boys’ in many countries. The numbers of literate young women are also increasing as a result. In 1990, 80.1 per cent of women aged between 15 and 24 were literate as opposed to 88.2 per cent of men, and in the period from 2000 to 2004 it had risen to 84.0 per cent of women and 90.4 per cent of men.<sup>12</sup> There are more female teachers than ever before. These changes are all to be welcomed.

Missed goals

However, some of the Millennium Development Goals that relate to girls’ education have not been achieved. The UN Secretary General, in his 2006 report, notes that: “the goal for gender parity [in the case of schools, equal numbers of girls and boys] by 2005, has been missed.” In 2004, of 181 countries for which data exists, only two-thirds had reached gender parity at primary level, one third at secondary level (out of 177 countries) and only five countries out of 148 with data had reached gender parity at tertiary level.<sup>14</sup>

The good news is that recent progress in enrolments at primary level has benefited girls in particular, with the global Gender Parity Index for primary education improving from 0.92 in 1999 to 0.94 in 2004.<sup>15</sup> Disparities

**Countries with the lowest Gender Parity Index<sup>17</sup> at primary level (years range from 1998 to 2002)<sup>18</sup>**

Afghanistan	0.60
Yemen	0.60
Chad	0.67
Niger	0.68
Burkina Faso	0.71
Guinea-Bissau	0.71
Mali	0.72
Côte d’Ivoire	0.73
Benin	0.77
Djibouti	0.77
Guinea	0.78
Liberia	0.78
Pakistan	0.79

UNICEF. April 2005. “Progress for Children, A report card on gender parity and primary education,” Number 2.

do remain and are now concentrated in Arab states, South and West Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Women make up almost two-thirds – sixty-four per cent – of the world’s adult illiterates.<sup>16</sup> There is still a long way to go. Once girls do get to school, the problems do not end. In addition, the quality of the education they receive is often low, with large classrooms and few resources. There are not enough female teachers to give girls support and to act as role models. Not surprisingly, girls are more likely than boys to drop out after a few years.

Afghanistan – education for all or a distant dream?

Under Taliban rule, education in Afghanistan was at an all-time low. Girls were not allowed to attend school at all and as a result literacy rates were among the lowest in the world. With the Taliban gone, children started returning to school. By December 2005, 5.1 million children were back in school, including 1.5 million girls.

But today, schools are closing and students are staying at home. In the four southern provinces more than 100,000 children are shut out of school. They are no longer safe places. As of July 2006, the UNICEF School Incident Database counted 99 cases of attacks against schools, including a missile attack, 11 explosions, 50 school burnings and 37 threats against schools and communities.<sup>19</sup>

Shugofa Sahar, a 12-year-old student at the Aysha-e-Durani High School for Girls, said: “All the girls and boys from Afghanistan should go to school in order to rebuild and develop our country”.<sup>20</sup>

But in today’s Afghanistan, this is becoming an increasingly distant dream.

In other countries, the picture is more hopeful. Social Watch Philippines reported that the Philippines is one of the few developing countries which has achieved basic parity between girls and boys in school access, retention and achievement in both rural and urban areas.<sup>21</sup>

During the 1990s, girls out-performed boys in gross and net primary enrolment rates, cohort survival to grade 6, repetition and dropout rates and in learning achievement.

In eight countries in Latin America, Plan and its local partners have reached 100,000 girls since the year 2000 with a girls’ education program. Methods used to increase their school attendance, completion and performance included the construction of separate latrines, the recruitment of female teachers to reduce sexual intimidation and an increase in girls’ participation in school councils. Stereotypes were removed from textbooks. An evaluation of this model in Guatemala showed that girls wanted to continue to study and were less inclined to get married at an early age.<sup>22</sup>

2. Primary education

There were an estimated 115 million primary age children who did not go to school in 2001.<sup>23</sup> Sixty-two million of the children out of school are girls.<sup>24</sup> That is more than all the girls in North America and Europe. Some have never attended school at all; others have had to drop out. The 2005 UN Millennium Development Goals report notes that: “In all developing regions, except Latin America and the Caribbean and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, girls are less likely than boys to remain in school. The gap between girls

**Primary children out of school (2004, millions)<sup>27</sup>**

	Boys	Girls
Sub-Saharan Africa	22.4	24.4
South Asia	19.1	23.7
East Asia/Pacific	4.1	3.9
Middle East/North Africa	4.4	5.3
Latin America/Caribbean	1.9	2.2
Central and Eastern Europe, CIS	1.4	1.4
Industrialized countries	1.5	1.5
Developing countries	21.4	23.6
<b>World total</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>62.2</b>

UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2005. “Children out of school: measuring exclusion from primary education.” Montreal. p 17



and boys is greatest in the 22 countries where fewer than 60 per cent of children complete their primary education.”<sup>25</sup>

There are a number of initiatives that aim to address this problem. At regional level, the African Girls’ Education Initiative, which was a partnership started in 1994 between African countries, donor governments and the United Nations, has led to increased access to school for both girls and boys. Between 1997 and 2001, gross primary enrolment ratios for girls rose by 15 per cent in Guinea, 12 per cent in Senegal and nine per cent in Benin.<sup>26,27</sup> In Chad, the number of girls enrolled increased four-fold over two years; the drop-out rate fell from 22 per cent to nine per cent and the number of female teachers increased from 36 to 787.<sup>28</sup>

3. Secondary education

In addition to the numbers at primary level, there are probably another 100 to 150 million older children who do not go to secondary school. At secondary level, in many countries, girls are even less likely than boys to go to school. They are married, or kept at home to

School access for girls has risen in many African countries.



do the household chores, or sent out to work. The gender gap at secondary school is greatest in South Asia and the Middle East/North Africa. In South Asia, 54 per cent of boys are in secondary school but only 48 per cent of girls, and in the Middle East/North Africa, the figures are 50 and 44 per cent.<sup>29</sup>

In Latin America, however, there are more girls than boys attending school at secondary level, as disaffected boys drop out.

Steps are being taken to address these problems. In Kenya, Maendeleo ya Wanawake initiated a ‘Girl Child Education Project’ in slums in Nairobi.<sup>32</sup> The project built informal schools where girls attend school and learn life skills. These schools are built close to the girls’ homes. In places where food resources are scarce for many poor families, the organisation has initiated a lunch programme for girls to reduce the need for them to sell sex in exchange for food.

In Brazil, where one percent of GDP is spent on an old age pension of \$70 a month, the pension is associated with increased school enrolment, particularly of girls aged 12-14 years. Alongside this is a national programme – Bolsa Familia – which aims to address high drop-out rates by targeting income subsidies to families with school-age children on the condition that each child attends school at least 90% of the time. Cash transfers are

paid directly to mothers. Studies show sharp reductions in school drop-out rates and higher enrolments in post-primary education.<sup>33</sup>

**Community school: new opportunities**  
*“Girls of our village had no opportunity to get education after Middle (grade 8). Girls’ education was not given importance. People having resources would admit their girls in private schools, but poor people could not do so. Since there is no government secondary school for girls in our village, hence a great number of girls could not get education after Middle. From the time community school became functional in our village all the girls belonging to poor families have started getting education. I myself have taken admission in 9th grade after waiting for four years having passed grade 8. As I had no resources therefore I had to stay at home for so many years... Twenty girls of this village would not have been studying in grade 10, if we had not got community school.”*

**Shazia Riaz**, student class IX, Community-managed school, Lissan Thakral, District Mansehra, Pakistan.<sup>34</sup>

**Boys doing badly**

In most countries, as we have seen, it is girls who are not attending school. But in Latin America and the Caribbean, it is boys, particularly from poor families, who are more



The status of women is a major factor in deciding whether girls, like these young Malawians, get secondary education.

likely to drop out of school. A study conducted in Chile found that poor boys are four times more likely to enter the workforce than poor girls. In Brazil, child labour has robbed boys of an education by luring them away from books with promises of money.<sup>35</sup>

In many industrialised countries, while there is gender parity in terms of attendance, girls are outperforming boys in schools. It is no longer seen as ‘cool’ to work hard, and so boys are falling behind girls in examinations.

A table of gender differences in selected European countries shows a marked gap between the reading levels of girls and boys.<sup>36</sup>

**4. The reasons why**

So why don’t children, and particularly girls, go to school, despite the fact that it is their right to do so? And why do more girls than boys drop out after a few years in poorer countries? There are a number of reasons, most of which are interlinked. The social position of women in society, poverty, social class and caste, and early marriage

are all contributory factors. Then there are those that relate to the overall quality and accessibility of the education provided.

**Women’s status**

Women’s status in society is one major factor. “The extent of illiteracy in a nation is a measure of that nation’s degree of attachment to social justice” says one Asian commentator, Manzoor Ahmed.<sup>37</sup> In many countries, a woman’s place is still seen as being in the home, and therefore a girl’s education is seen as less important than her brother’s. There are also relatively few women with decision-making positions in government or elsewhere to push an alternative view.

And these beliefs are hard to shift. Results from a World Values Survey<sup>38</sup> revealed that almost two-thirds of male respondents in Bangladesh indicated that university education for boys should be prioritised over that of girls – an opinion echoed by around one-third or more of male respondents in Iran, Uganda and Mexico and by 1 in 10 men in China and just under 1 in 13 in the United States.<sup>39</sup> Without

Secondary net attendance ratios, <sup>30</sup> selected countries (1996-2005) <sup>31</sup>		
	Girls	Boys
Yemen	32.4	78.2
Guinea	23.8	48.6
Côte d'Ivoire	28.5	48.8
Mozambique	31.7	54.0
Benin	35.2	58.6
Mali	22.4	36.2
Niger	10.6	16.9
Senegal	23.6	36.2
Chad	36.6	56.0
Iraq	40.3	60.1

UNICEF, The State of the World's Children, 2007

	Girls' average reading score	Boys' average reading score
Finland	573	522
France	517	488
Greece	492	454
Italy	506	471
Austria	516	482
UK	539	511
Ireland	542	513

Claire, H. (Ed.) (2005). Gender in education 3-19 - A fresh approach. London: Association of Teachers and Lecturers.

an education, women too often hold the same beliefs that men are somehow intrinsically superior.

There is an old Bengali saying: “Caring for a daughter is like watering another’s tree”. It reflects the belief that a daughter will be lost to the family through marriage, and that it is therefore not prudent to invest in a daughter in the same way as a son, who will support his parents in their old age.<sup>40</sup>

Taklitin Walet Farati, a non-governmental organisation worker in Mali, visits girls’ homes and tries to persuade their parents to send them to school: “I’d go and check why girls weren’t attending school, to be told by their mothers: ‘We can’t let our daughters go to school. We need them in the home. They are our hands and feet!’”<sup>41</sup>

### Poverty and working children

A second reason why girls fail to attend school is because they come from poor families. Faced with the choice between sending a son to school or a daughter, parents will almost always choose the son. A survey in Pakistan showed that girls’ enrolment in schools increases with a rise in family income. Household survey data from all developing regions show that children from the poorest 20 per cent of households are 3.2 times more likely to be out of primary school than those from the wealthiest 20 per cent.<sup>42</sup>

Even when education is ostensibly free, there are often a number of hidden costs such as transport, school uniforms or books that mean a family cannot afford to educate its children. A girl may be kept at home to look after younger siblings and run the household while her parents work to earn a living and her brothers go to school. Or she may be kept out of school in order to work and contribute to the family income. There are 211 million children between five and 14 years old who are working, mostly in agriculture. That is 18 per cent of the world’s children in this age group.<sup>43</sup>

Girls like Sylvia in Tanzania, who worked as a domestic servant. This report comes from Anti-Slavery International: “Despite only being



ADAM HINTON

a young teenager, she worked long hours cooking, cleaning and doing the majority of household chores. She was made to sleep on the floor, was only given leftovers to eat and was not paid for her labour. When one of the men in the household severely beat her for refusing his sexual advances, she fled. A neighbour referred her to the local organisation Kivulini which provided her with safe shelter and compensation from her ‘employer’.<sup>44</sup>

In order to address this problem in Bangladesh, the government introduced the Female Stipend Programme in 1994. This is aimed at girls in classes 6-10 who are offered a small allowance, free tuition, a book allowance, and payment for their exams. For this, they must show 75 per cent attendance, obtain a minimum of 45 per cent in their exams and remain unmarried until they have completed their Secondary Certificate of Education in Year 10. The programme has increased girls’ enrolment at secondary level, with numbers peaking at 4 million in 2001 when criteria for the stipend were tightened up. It helped Bangladesh achieve gender parity by 2000.

### Abigail’s story: teaching a girl is a beautiful thing

Abigail is just one of 750,000 Zambian children who have been orphaned by AIDS. Many of these children – particularly girls – are robbed of the chance of an education because of poverty.

*Making time for homework in Cambodia.*

When Abigail’s parents died of AIDS, she was forced to drop out of school. She went to live with her elderly grandmother in rural Zambia, who struggled to support her orphaned granddaughter. Yet educating girls is the single most effective weapon against HIV and AIDS in Zambia, where the life expectancy for girls like Abigail is just 33.

With the help of CAMFED (The Campaign for Female Education), Abigail was able to return to school. For every year of education she receives beyond primary school, Abigail’s future income will increase by 15 per cent and her vulnerability to AIDS will drop significantly.

Today, 18-year-old Abigail is about to finish her final exams. Today, she dreams of becoming a journalist or an accountant. “When I start working, I want to help other orphaned children and put them through school. Teaching a girl is a very beautiful thing.”<sup>45</sup>

backward communities... have been totally bypassed by educational and other services,” says one UNESCO report.<sup>46</sup>

### The plight of Phulmani, the ‘mouse-eater’

Phulmani is eight years old. She stays with her family in a village called Amardaha, in south-eastern Nepal. She belongs to the community of *rishidevs* (the mice eaters). Her family is considered ‘untouchable’ and they live as landless squatters. Phulmani has been enrolled in the school, through the efforts of a development organisation in the area, but does not attend, as her parents cannot give money for the school books she needs. Her mother does not think that it is important for her daughter to study. She still wants more sons.

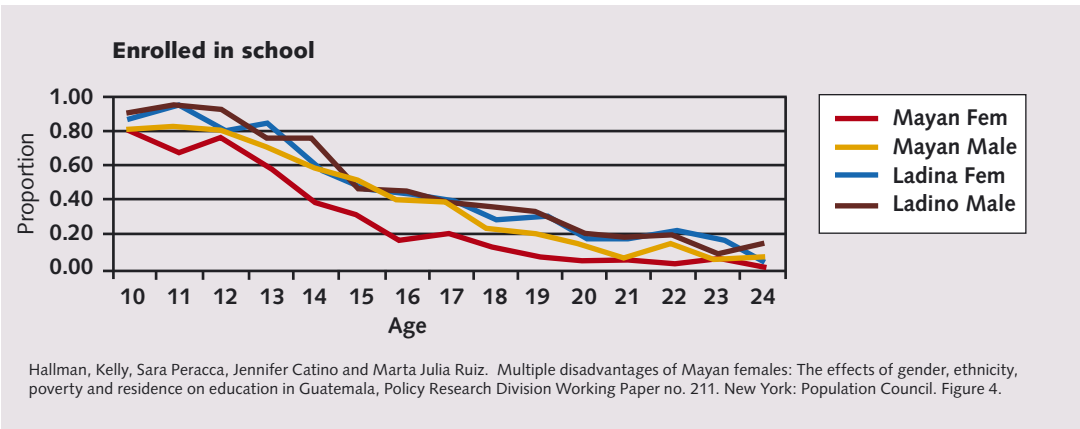
She says her husband is happy that she has produced a son after three daughters. Phulmani’s eldest sister Bairi is married. She is 18 years old and has a two-and-a-half-year old son. She encourages Phulmani to study and wishes that she too had had the chance.<sup>47</sup>

## 5. Girls from particular groups

### Girls from minority groups

Girls from lower classes or castes, who are also more likely to be poor, often lose out the most. For example, in India, girls from higher social and economic classes record better achievement than boys in poorer communities. “Women from landless households, among them those from social and economically

Girls from indigenous and other minority groups are another sector who are less likely to go to school than their peers. For example, in Serbia and Montenegro, the dropout rate for Roma girls is reported to be up to 80 per cent higher than for boys.<sup>48</sup> In Guatemala, one study showed how Mayan girls were the least likely to go to school, followed by Mayan boys.<sup>49</sup>



## Children with disabilities

Children with disabilities often do not benefit from education, though they are as entitled to it as any other child. It is estimated that around 40 million of the 115 million currently out of school are children with disabilities.<sup>50</sup> Again, parents keep girls in particular at home – as in Bangladesh where parents fear stigmatisation and sexual abuse – or send them to institutions, rather than have them face the difficulties and prejudices of the outside world.<sup>51</sup>

### Nodira's wish

Nodira is one of five children. Her name means 'unique' in Uzbek. Her family is poor and she has never been to school because it is too far to go in a wheelchair. She had a tutor for a while but then the family moved house.

Every morning, after reciting her prayers, Nodira feeds the hens and goats from her wheelchair. The rest of her day is spent knitting for other people and helping her mother with the household chores. She also tries to study and still has a dream of going to university, although in fact it is unlikely that she will even finish primary education.

Her greatest wish is simple: she wants a friend. "What I want more than anything is a friend who also has a disability," she says. "Somebody to talk to that will not feel sorry for me or make fun of me, somebody who will understand what my life is like."<sup>52</sup>

There are many projects that aim to get girls and boys with disabilities into school. In 1996, China launched a national plan on inclusive education for children with disabilities which included a project known as the Golden Key. Golden Key has helped people like Lan Rue, a visually impaired 10-year-old girl who is one of nearly 2,000 who have been integrated into mainstream schools. Each child is allocated a personal instructor, Braille books, writing boards and cassette recorders.<sup>53</sup> The Golden Key Research Centre of Education for the Visually

Impaired in Beijing continues to provide services to the visually impaired throughout China.<sup>54</sup>

### Ten messages for teachers about children with disabilities

1. Prevent stereotypes and negative attitudes about children with disabilities by avoiding negative words.
2. Depict children with disabilities with equal status as those without disabilities.
3. Allow children with disabilities to speak for themselves and express their thoughts and feelings.
4. Observe children and identify disabilities. The earlier a disability is detected in a child, the more effective the intervention and the less severe the disability.
5. Refer the child whose disability is identified for developmental screening and early intervention.
6. Adapt the lessons, learning materials and classroom to the needs of children with disabilities.
7. Sensitise parents, families and caregivers about the special needs of children with disabilities.
8. Teach frustrated parents simple ways to deal with and manage their child's needs.
9. Guide siblings and other family members in lessening the pain and frustration of parents of children with disabilities.
10. Actively involve parents of young children with disabilities as full members in planning school and after school activities.<sup>55</sup>

## 6. Inside school

### Article 29

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:  
(a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and

physical abilities to their fullest potential;  
(b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Even once they have arrived at school, girls face problems that may be the cause of high drop out rates. The situation is often worse in rural areas than in urban ones: for example, a study in India found that 41.3 per cent of rural girls in the 10-14 age group dropped out of school, compared to 16.6 per cent in urban areas<sup>56</sup>.

**First** is the fact that there are still relatively few female teachers, although this varies considerably from country to country and numbers are rising. In Sub-Saharan Africa, fewer than one in four teachers is a woman.<sup>57</sup> In Latin America and the Caribbean, however, women account for 80 per cent of teachers. Countries that have a high enrolment at primary level tend to employ a higher number of female teachers.<sup>58</sup> A study from Pakistan notes: "Rural parents find the presence of female teachers reassuring. Moreover, a female teacher, a career woman, often acts as a role model and helps dispel gender stereotype attitudes in girls and their families." In Kenya, the Strengthening Primary School Management Project boosted the number of female head-teachers from 10 to 23 per cent over a ten-year period by requiring that one out of two head-teachers being trained was a woman. Female primary school teachers now account for 41 per cent of the total.

**Second**, girls, particularly after puberty, may not feel safe at school. They may face sexual harassment and physical abuse from teachers and peers, both in school itself and on the journey home. Carolina from Honduras explains that "teachers use violence because they think it is the only way to keep control."<sup>59</sup> According to the World Health Organisation: "For many young women, the most common place where sexual coercion and harassment are experienced is in school."<sup>60</sup> In South Africa, 32 per cent of reported child rapes were carried out by a teacher.<sup>61</sup> Teachers promise better grades in return for sexual favours. An



additional danger for girls in many countries may be the risk of being infected with HIV. In some countries there is a belief that HIV can be cured by sex with a young woman who is a virgin (see Chapter 4 – Health).

Girls may also face violence and sexual harassment when travelling to and from school; a 12-14 year old girl from the Kaqchikel community, one of the larger ethno-linguistic groups in Guatemala, reported that: "On the roads and on the street [we feel unsafe] because there are men there that tease/harass you and we don't like that."<sup>62</sup> Girls aged eight to 10 in a private school in Katmandu, Nepal, said: "As a punishment for not doing homework the teacher used to let them go if they agreed to kiss him on the cheek or he made them kiss a friend of the opposite sex. He made them sit on his lap if they asked him to return their notebooks."<sup>63</sup> Such harassment is not just in the developing world. Research from the US shows four out of five students – girls and boys – report that they have experienced some type of sexual harassment in school, despite a greater awareness of school policies dealing with the issue. The study showed that girls are more likely to report being negatively affected.<sup>64</sup>

There are a number of initiatives at government, school, teacher and pupil level to address the issue of sexual violence in school. One example from Nigeria is the Girls' Power Initiative (GPI), which promotes comprehensive sexuality education that has five overlapping

*The performance of girls is improved by female teachers and a girl friendly environment.*



aspects: human development, emotions and relationships, sexual health, sexual behaviour and sexual violence. The project believes: “there truly cannot be empowerment where there is no knowledge and control over that which is basically ours: our bodies.”<sup>65</sup> It is aimed mainly at girls aged 10-18 with some programmes also for boys, parents, teachers, health care providers and policy makers which aim to increase communication between them and girls on issues affecting the girl child. A young Nigerian woman said: “GPI weekly meetings... opened my eyes really wide. I began to take note and notice that girls were... being denied enjoyment of fundamental human rights all because of sex. I realised that women are being raped, cheated upon, pushed to the background, sexually harassed and battered by their so-called husbands and yet nobody says anything, nobody seems to notice because it has to do with females/women. Seeing all [this]... I took a step of courage, made up my mind and decided to be part of the struggle to let the world know that [women’s] rights are human rights.”<sup>66</sup>

Homophobic bullying and harassment are widespread. A European survey found that 58 per cent of young lesbians surveyed had been bullied in school and that the problem appeared to be on the rise.<sup>67</sup> Pupils who do not fit gender stereotypes – such as the ‘Sissy-boy’ or the ‘Tom-girl’ – are typical victims of bullying. One Portuguese girl was too young to understand what was happening to her when she was bullied: “A bunch of kids once stole my wallet and cut it to pieces, and all the stuff inside it, like ID, photos, etc because they thought I was gay. Funny thing is, I had no idea back then, I was 13 and a tomboy. They judged me on my appearance, because I dressed like a boy.”<sup>68</sup>

A 2005 report reveals that violence against young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students continues to be the rule, not the exception, in America’s schools.

- 75 per cent report being verbally harassed because of their sexual orientation.
- 37.8 per cent report being physically harassed because of their sexual orientation.

- Only 16.5 per cent of students reported a teacher intervening when a homophobic remark was made.<sup>69</sup>

**Third**, there are very practical issues that may prevent girls going to school, especially once they reach puberty. Adequate and sex-segregated hygiene and sanitation facilities; a school that is within easy and safe reach of home, all contribute to more girls attending school – and their parents being happy about them doing so. The lack of access to water and sanitation both in school and in the wider community is a major factor influencing poor school attendance and learning. In the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, for example, UNICEF says: “More than a fifth of girls nationwide are not enrolled in school and in some areas the rate is more than 50 per cent. The issue is not just the lack of facilities in schools, but their absence in the wider community... In addition, the household chore of fetching water falls mainly to girls, who can spend as much as two hours a day on the activity... Even those who make it to school may be sent by their teachers to fetch water...”<sup>70</sup>

Napoga Gurigo, from Tengzuk village in Ghana, is around 12 years old. She gets up at 5am to fetch water for her family from the waterhole. On average it takes six hours to collect water as they have to wait for water to seep through the ground and the mud to settle. Animals also drink from the same waterhole. Napoga does not go to school; most of her time is spent undertaking household tasks. She lives with her future husband’s family.<sup>71</sup>

Last but certainly not least, there are issues about quality. It is not enough just to attend school; girls (and their parents) have to feel that what they are learning is useful and appropriate. Sometimes classes are so large and the curriculum seems so irrelevant that it does not seem worth the many sacrifices. In Bangladesh: “Gender bias in the education planning is reflected by the sex-role stereotypes presented in the text-books. Women and girls are presented as passive characters, while boys and men are presented in various active roles. In addition, the fact that the course content

and course design seldom reflect the realities of rural women’s life also acts as a deterrent. Lack of flexibility and neglect of addressing learner needs also act as a deterrent (particularly for rural girls).” How can education empower women, when they only learn about men?

“There is little point in giving a girl the opportunity to go to school if the quality of her education is so poor that she will not become literate and numerate or if she will not acquire skills needed for life. Improving the quality of education must be high on national agendas if girls are to go to school and stay in school,” says UNICEF.

Combining all the factors that keep girls in school can work as a strategy. In Senegal, a social mobilisation project for girls’ enrolment led by the Head of State was set up 1994. As a result, enrolment increased in the first year of primary education by 41.5 per cent in 1994 and by 53 per cent in 1996. Committees and mobile schools were set up throughout the country. The government established a watchdog on

gender in education that aimed to eradicate gender prejudice from schools and textbooks.

The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) created materials for education practitioners about issues affecting girls at school. It has produced best practice guides, ranging from protecting girls from HIV/AIDS via peer counselling in schools to providing recommendations regarding girls’ education in conflict situations.<sup>72</sup>

It is not just girls who benefit: all the changes that encourage girls to attend school can also make learning more possible for boys. A study by USAID in eight countries concluded that programmes and policies to improve girls’ education have also benefited boys. In a few countries, such as Brazil, girls are now doing better than boys and staying on longer in school. This is particularly true when they reach adolescence: at ages 15 to 17, 19.2 per cent of boys have dropped out altogether, compared with only 8.5 per cent of girls.<sup>73</sup> In the industrialised world, boys

**Snakes and ladders**  
**Factors that facilitate and impede successful primary school completion for girls**

LADDERS (GIRLS)	Strong	Very strong	Exceptionally strong
A bright and welcoming school			++++
School within reachable distance (girls)		+++	
Affectionate, kind and empathetic teachers			++++
A mother who values education for the child			++++
Good relationship between mother and father			
Adult in the family who values education		+++	
Mother concerned about welfare of the child		+++	
Strict monitoring by parents / family members			
Adults in the family who can care for siblings			++++
Having fewer siblings, but not being the eldest		+++	
Being the youngest child		+++	
Role models / success stories where education has resulted in tangible benefits in terms of social status and / or livelihood / upward mobility (girls).			++++

SNAKES (GIRLS)	Strong	Very strong	Exceptionally strong
Having a mother who goes out to work for long hours		+++	
Large family and many siblings to care for		+++	
Birth order – or being eldest			++++
Having an uncaring mother		+++	
Alcoholism in the family (father / mother)		+++	
Domestic violence	++		
Being sick or disabled		+++	
Being in a lower caste / disadvantaged community	++		
Death, disability and illness in the family		+++	
Work during peak agricultural cycles (regularly)		+++	
Where education has not led to tangible benefits in terms of social status / livelihood / upward mobility of local youth (negative role models)		+++	
Drought / other disasters		+++	
Hunger (persisting)		+++	
Teachers get children to do personal chores / Teachers beat children or other harsh punishment	++		
Being a girl	++		
Parents / sibling with disability			++++
School that is far away	++		
Burden of work (at home / outside)		+++	
Social practices: early marriage		+++	
Social practices: dowry (more education leads to greater demand for dowry)	++		
Teacher addiction (safety of girls threatened)			++++

are doing less well than girls across the board and a number of government strategies are in place to redress the balance. Many of these try to address the fact that boys’ disaffection with school may be connected to the way they are learning to be men. In Nigeria, the Conscientising Male Adolescents programme involves boys in school in a year of weekly discussions with a specially trained teacher. They talk about gender role, relationships,

their own families and the pressure to be ‘macho’. Boys who have been through the programme have skills in discussion and debate that make them role models for others.<sup>74</sup>

### 7. What still needs to be done?

There are a number of factors that can be put in place to ensure that girls get to school and stay there. Research in South Asia identified the

‘ladders’ – conditions that make it easier for girls to attend primary school and the ‘snakes’ – those which make it more difficult, which can be seen in the table opposite. They also identified which of these factors were the strongest priorities.<sup>75</sup>

Country by country, there are many successful projects and initiatives that have helped to improve gender parity at both primary and secondary level, many of which deal with some of the issues in the table above. Some are at regional level, following international commitments; some are at government level and some at community level.

There are many reasons why girls do not attend school, therefore a range of strategies and solutions is required to increase attendance and completion of school by girls. **From the evidence in this chapter, some government and community strategies are working:**

- Government commitment to free and compulsory primary education has increased school enrolment across the world. Such a policy needs continued financial commitment from national and donor governments.
- Scholarships and stipends have increased girls’ attendance in several countries, including Bangladesh, Brazil and Mexico. Educational programmes – both formal and informal – for girls who are not in school have enabled these girls to continue to learn.
- Creating a girl-friendly environment and improving the quality of education that girls can receive. This has been done by making the classroom and curriculum materials gender sensitive and child-centred, increasing the numbers of trained female teachers and ensuring that they are remunerated for their efforts, improving the sanitation facilities in school, and developing programmes which focus on life skills.
- Promoting child protection in schools ensures a safe environment for girls, in particular. This has been done by ensuring that schools are secure, that girls do not have to spend time alone

with male teachers, that lighting is good in and around the school, and that schools are close to children’s homes. Sexual harassment and abuse in schools, whether by teachers or peers, should be stamped out.

- Putting girls, their parents and communities in control and giving them a say in education leads to more committed pupils. This includes through active participation in school committees and supporting efforts from early childhood development through to tertiary education.
- Governments that have changed and enforced early marriage legislation need to influence the attitudes of families and communities, in order to see results.

### 8. Girls’ voices

*“The main problem in our community is poverty. Parents do not have enough money to send their children to school. Some parents use their children to increase the household income. They force their daughters to abandon school to do some petty trading in the market, or to get married. Sometimes they even send them abroad to do domestic work.”*

Children’s opinions recorded in a focus group discussion in Togo.<sup>76</sup>

*“Going to school has changed my life. I’ve learnt many things and made friends. But what I like most is my teacher, because she listens to me and is very loving. I’ve seen what happens to other kids in my neighbourhood who don’t go to school. They spend their days sniffing glue, begging for money and getting into trouble. I feel sorry for them.”*

Yuleni, 13, Venezuela.<sup>77</sup>



# Health

## Two thirds of 15-19 year olds newly infected with HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa are girls

# 4

### Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 24

1. States Parties recognise the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health.
2. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services.

### 1. Introduction

*“Women’s right to the enjoyment of the highest standard of health must be secured throughout the whole life cycle in equality with men.”*

Platform of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing

Girls and women are healthier than they have ever been. Over the past few decades, life expectancy has increased by more than 10 years and fertility rates have decreased.<sup>1</sup> In Latin America, in particular, some of the health gains for girls and women have been notable. But more than half a million girls and women – 99 per cent of whom live in countries of the South – still die unnecessarily every year from pregnancy-related causes. Many more – particularly young women – die from unsafe abortions. Especially in the South, girls and

women are more vulnerable than men to the risk of HIV and AIDS. They are less likely than men to have control over when and how they have sex. Girls often have less access to health care than their male counterparts. They may be less well fed than their brothers. And adolescent girls in the rich world are more likely than boys to suffer from mental health problems such as anorexia and self-harming. Girls and young women are just as entitled as boys and young men to adequate and appropriate health services and to proper levels of care and medical treatment.

### 2. Water and sanitation

*“Progress in child health is unlikely to be sustained if one third of the developing world’s children remain without access to clean drinking water and half of them without adequate sanitary facilities.”*

UN Plan of Action from the World Declaration on Children<sup>2</sup>

Clean water and safe sanitation is a major factor affecting the health of children and adults. And in many countries where this is not supplied, it is the responsibility of girls and young women to fetch water, often from a long way away. One Kenyan study found that women and girls carry from 20-25 litres



over distances of 3.5 kilometres, for one or two hours daily. It notes that “as school-age children are often used for this task, class attendance is reduced.”<sup>3</sup> As Judith, aged 14, from Zambia points out: “Girls are also the ones that fetch water from streams. Some of the streams are infested with crocodiles and water borne diseases. So the girls are attacked by crocodiles and catch diseases.”<sup>4</sup>

#### Unworthy tasks

*“Unfortunately, in my beautiful country Cameroon, potable water is not found everywhere. In addition the quality does not always meet up with the characteristics of good drinking water, (colourless, odourless, and tasteless), because of this, people suffer from water borne diseases. In the villages, people trek for kilometres to fetch drinking water from wells or running streams.*

*“Worse still is the fact that this unworthy task is assigned to only young girls and women who are victims of gender discriminations. The young boy is privileged to have good education, while the girls go to fetch water from streams. One often sees them with big basins of water on their heads in the early mornings, afternoons and evenings to fetch water while the boys play football forgetting that they need water to take a bath. ‘After all’ they say ‘why worry when God has blessed us with one or more sisters to relieve us of this task’. Without water she will not be able to perform other household duties, such as laundry, cooking, and washing of dishes.*

*“In Bertoua, in my neighbourhood, after school or early in the morning, you will meet on your way a group of girls queuing up before the only village well waiting to fetch water.”*

Ida, 16 years, Children’s Forum Plan Bertoua.

Women are the guardians of water, and young girls may find themselves spending many hours fetching and carrying, to the detriment of their



CAROLINE IRBY

education. And yet women and girls are rarely consulted when it comes to planning water supplies and service. A UNESCO report says: “The time has come to take stock of experience gained and to achieve a clearer understanding of the contribution gender participation makes to critical aspects of community water and sanitation programmes.”<sup>5</sup>

*An Ethiopian mother feeds her baby. If a woman is properly fed herself as a child she is more likely to bear healthy babies.*

### 3. Nourishment and nutrition

Girls and boys face different health issues, not just because they are physiologically different, but because of their status in society. While physically girls are often more resilient than boys, the way they are treated from birth in comparison with their brothers often leaves them at a disadvantage. For example, in many

cultures, it is traditional for the boys and men to eat first, and for girls and women to eat the leftovers. When food is short, this can mean that the females of the family have very little to eat or go without. (See Chapter 1 – *Survival*).<sup>6</sup> Malnourished girls and women are also likely to be anaemic (lack of iron in the blood), which can lead to problems in pregnancy and maternal death, not to mention exhaustion and loss of productivity. One in five women and half of all pregnant women are iron deficient.<sup>7</sup> In India, 60 to 70 per cent of adolescent girls are anaemic.<sup>8</sup> Anaemia is often due to nutritional deficiencies, and particularly affects pregnant women, and pre and school-age children.

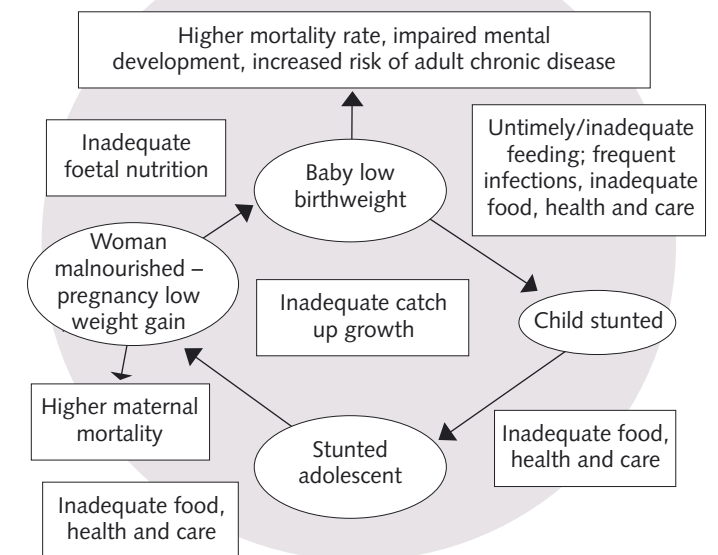
The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights notes that: “Countless reports the world over have demonstrated that, in societies where son preference is practised, the health of the female child is adversely affected.” The report continues: “For every growing girl who dies, there are many more whose health and potential for growth and development are permanently impaired.”<sup>9</sup>

Lack of proper nutrition from an early age affects a girl not only as a child but into her adult years, as the diagram below shows (see also Chapter 1 – *Survival*). Because a mother is underweight, her baby is born with low birth weight. She is not fed well, and may be stunted as a result. Continuing inadequate nutrition and care leads to problems in adolescence and into womanhood. The Declaration from the Beijing Women’s Conference in 1995 said: “Discrimination against the girl child in her access to nutrition and physical and mental health services endangers her current and future health and that of her children. An estimated 450 million adult women in developing countries are stunted as a result of childhood protein-energy malnutrition.”<sup>10</sup>

#### Obesity

At the same time, obesity is becoming a serious problem, particularly in the richer world. This is a worrying health problem. A study for the YWCA in Britain noted that:

#### Poor nutrition throughout the female life cycle<sup>11</sup>



State of the World’s Mothers 2006, Save the Children US, page 17.

- Over half of women are either overweight or obese
- One in three 11-year old girls is overweight
- Among 16-24 year olds, twice as many young women as young men are overweight
- Obesity was particularly prevalent among low income groups and deprived black and minority ethnic groups
- By the age of 15, only 36 per cent of girls participate in some form of physical activity for 30 minutes a day, compared to 71 per cent of boys.<sup>12</sup>

The study noted that there has been a substantial rise in obesity among girls and women in the last 20 years, not only in Britain but in other industrialised countries. The same is true in the US, where another study concluded that almost nine million children aged 6 – 19 were overweight in 2000. There is a strong link for girls from as early as nursery age between being overweight and behaviour problems such as low self-esteem, anxiety, loneliness, sadness, anger, arguing and fighting. It continues: “At this rate the current generation of children will not live as long as their parents.”<sup>13</sup>

4. Body image

In the industrialised world in particular, mental health problems related to body image are increasingly common in young women. They believe that social acceptability is related to being thin, and try to copy the waif-like models that they see every day in advertisements. In a study of 35 countries, mainly in the rich world and Eastern Europe, on average around a quarter of 11-year-old girls, rising to 40 per cent of 15 year olds, thought they were too fat.<sup>14</sup> One study in Britain found that almost half of young women aged 16 – 24 were trying to lose weight.<sup>15</sup> In Canada, more than one in four teenage girls has symptoms of an eating disorder, while in Japan, “one in every 20 girls enrolled at high schools in the Tokyo metropolitan area suffers from anorexia nervosa.”<sup>16</sup>

Anorexia can lead to premature osteoporosis, amenorrhoea or lack of menstrual periods, exhaustion and even death. So why do young women starve themselves in this way? Amanda, aged 19, said: “I don’t think I could pinpoint one thing that makes me happy about being anorexic. I suppose it makes me feel special in a way, that it’s something not everybody can have, and that I have more control over myself than everybody else.”<sup>17</sup>

The desire to have the ‘perfect’ body also leads young women in the North to undergo cosmetic surgery at ever younger ages. In the US, between 2000 and 2001, the number of cosmetic surgeries in under-18 year olds increased from 65,231 to 79,501 – 21.8 per cent. The American Society of Plastic Surgeons says that 88 per cent of its patients are women.

Increasing numbers of young women cut and mutilate themselves, saying that in a world where they have little control over anything, this is something they can choose to do that makes them feel alive.

5. Young women and tobacco, alcohol and drugs

An estimated one billion people smoke tobacco. It is one of the chief preventable causes of

death in the world. By 2030, another billion young women and men will have started to smoke.<sup>18</sup> While there used to be more boys who smoked than girls, today, tobacco use among young women is increasing. In parts of Europe and South America, girls are now smoking more than boys. Young people in the South smoke more than their counterparts in the North.

Most adult smokers started smoking when they were teenagers. Why do girls start smoking? For many of the same reasons as boys – low prices, easy access, tobacco advertising, peer pressure and the belief that smoking will make them more popular. Young women also smoke because they believe it will keep them thin.

A United Nations report notes: “The higher level of tobacco use among girls suggests that there is a need for specific policies and programmes for girls to counteract marketing strategies that target young women by associating tobacco use with independence, glamour and romance.”<sup>19</sup>

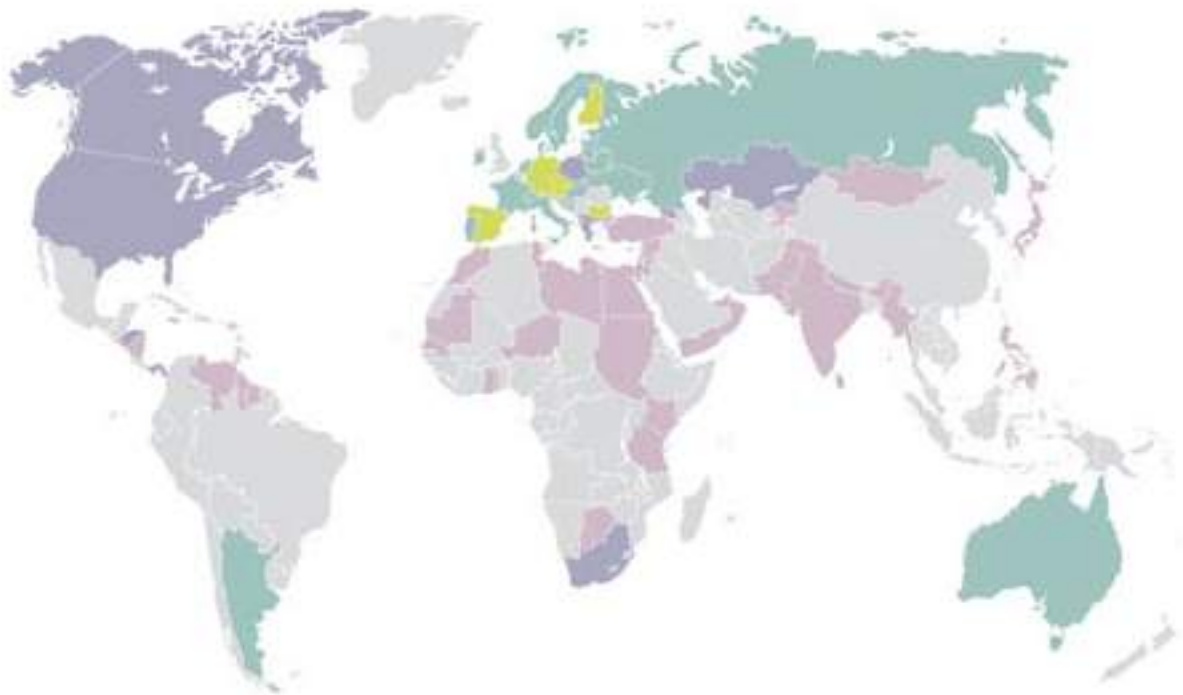
It appears that young people in many countries are also beginning to drink alcohol at earlier ages. Research in industrialised countries has found early initiation of alcohol use to be associated with a greater likelihood of both alcohol dependence and alcohol-related injury later in life. Boys are more likely than girls to drink alcohol and to drink heavily. However, in several European countries, levels of drinking among young women have started to equal, or even surpass, those of young men.<sup>20</sup> There is little data on drinking among young people in developing countries but some studies in Latin America show that young women in particular are starting to drink more.<sup>21</sup>

**Young people close down the bars<sup>22</sup>**  
**Amarilis Martinez is a 17 year-old girl from a community called Santiago Puringla, Honduras. She is the leader in her community of an adolescent peer education group, called Childpro, who have tackled binge drinking in their community – by closing down all the bars. It started with a discussion in which the group identified binge drinking as**

**one of the major problems affecting their lives, causing family breakdown and domestic violence. They went on to lobby decision makers, handing out leaflets and posters showing people how much harm alcohol does. They tackled the bars’ owners. An important part of their tactics was winning the support of the local Mayor. They also gave talks to the local community on alcoholism and children’s rights. Amarilis says: “We are proud of our achievement in getting the bars shut down. We had seen a lot of violence in our community due to alcohol – and there were always a lot of drunk people on the streets. The effects were that children were going hungry and becoming malnourished and were not going to school if their fathers spent their money in the bars. Now the town is a much better place. People do**

**still drink inside their houses but it has improved so much.”**  
**The children are now seen as important decision-makers in the town. It has given them the confidence that they can change things. Amarilis says: “When I’m older I would like to be a professional in children’s rights and be able to help the poorest children in our community. I would also like to meet with the President of the United States to talk about education in my community.”**

Both alcohol and tobacco companies continue to target young people. In the North, there have been some restrictions on advertisements that are directly aimed at the young, and so the companies have turned their attention to young people in countries in transition and in the South, where there are fewer health and safety regulations.<sup>23</sup>



**Young women smoking** Percentage of 15-year-old female students who smoke cigarettes

30.0% and above	16.0% - 29.9%	7.0% - 15.9%	below 7.0%	no data
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Tobacco Atlas Online based on 1999-2004 data from Mackay, J (et al), The Tobacco Atlas, 2005 (American Cancer Society and Global Tobacco Research Network). Accessed from <http://www.tobaccoresearch.net/atlas.html>

A 1999 survey of 80 countries by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime found that young people are growing up in a culture that is increasingly tolerant of drug use. Globally, 13.5 per cent of youth aged 15-24 have tried cannabis at least once (although that average hides individual figures varying from 1.7 per cent in Peru to 37 per cent in the UK); an average of 1.9 per cent have taken cocaine at least once (again, this average hides differences: 0.8 per cent in Colombia; 4.5 per cent in Kenya).<sup>24</sup>

Cannabis is still the most widely used youth drug after alcohol, particularly in the industrialised world. A British study in 1995 showed that one in five girls between the ages of 14 and 25 used cannabis at least once a week, and 22 per cent of 15 and 16 year old girls had tried it.<sup>25</sup> Many girls reportedly linked drink and drugs with being sociable and more mature. Intravenous drug use among young people in some Central Asian countries has been on the increase since the early 1990s. In these countries, there are ten times the number of people injecting drugs as in Western European countries. Up to 25 per cent of those who inject in Central Asia and Eastern Europe are under 20. A study of teenage children in Uzbekistan found that three per cent had used drugs, some of them from the age of eleven, and another two per cent were interested in trying.<sup>26</sup>

### **Sally's story<sup>27</sup>**

**From the age of 13, Sally started skipping school and spending time with other children who drank and smoked cannabis. At 14, she had a boyfriend who introduced her to heroin and crack cocaine. She stayed with him for six years because she was afraid he would kill her "and I couldn't survive without him." In order to get money for drugs, she slept with her dealers. "I knew I was either going to die or be killed. I was sleeping with men for money. The way I felt inside, I was pure scum. I wasn't worthy of anything. I wasn't worthy of breathing the same air as people."**

**Finally she managed to get to a**

**rehabilitation centre and came off drugs. After a period of being very lonely and depressed, she got a new partner and had two children. But she knew she could turn the clock back at any moment: "If I've had a really bad day, when the kids stress me out and I think, God I would love to score. All it takes is just one trigger. It is having the strength to fight it when those triggers happen."**

**She was recommended to visit the YWCA by her health visitor: "At YWCA I feel safe and secure and really welcome. It helps that it's just for women and everyone is about my age." She has taken part in several courses and joined groups and sessions while her children play happily in the crèche. She has other young women to talk to and share things with and has found a network of people who care to help her through the tough times. "I have grown in confidence. I can communicate better with people," she says. Now Sally wants to put her experiences to good use by becoming a volunteer for a drugs project to help other users find ways to get clean and stay clean.**

## **6. Mental health**

Mental health is also a major cause of lifetime disability. Globally, for both men and women, mental and neurological conditions account for 30.8 per cent of all years lived with disability. Depression accounts for almost 12 per cent of this. Cross-national surveys in Brazil, Chile, India and Zimbabwe show that many mental disorders are twice as common among poor compared with rich people.<sup>28</sup>

Mental health problems affect young men and women in different ways. More boys, for example, are aggressive and anti-social, while girls are more likely to be depressed or suffer from an eating disorder. With the exception of China and parts of India, although men and boys are more likely to actually commit suicide, more girls and women are likely to make attempts.<sup>29</sup>

However, suicide rates for adolescent females in the US increased threefold between 1960 and 1980.<sup>30</sup> In general, adolescent girls tend to turn their mental health problems in on themselves, while boys act them out.

Depression is often associated with a feeling of lack of control over one's life. In the UK, the number of teenagers in full-time education between the ages of 16 and 18 taking anti-depressants increased from 46,000 in 1995 to 140,000 in 2003. In the US in 1997, "more adolescents died from suicide than AIDS, cancer, heart disease, birth defects and lung disease."<sup>31</sup>

Because of gender roles, and their status in society, girls and women are more prone to mental disorders. A study from China suggests that arranged marriages, unwanted abortions, problems with in-laws and 'an enforced nurturing role' leads to psychological disorders in women. Sexual abuse in childhood can also lead to mental problems later in life.<sup>32</sup> The fact that girls and young women generally find themselves in a caring role can also have a big psychological impact, particularly at other times of psychological stress, such as the death of a parent or close relative.

### **Nomalanga's story<sup>33</sup>**

**When 12 year-old Nomalanga attended a children's participation workshop in Zimbabwe, she was subjected to taunts and insults from other children: "Your father and mother died from AIDS," they said. Nomalanga felt humiliated and rejected. Later, in a tearful counselling session, she explained: "My friends say that because my father died of AIDS, this means he was an immoral person."**

**The workshop organisers responded swiftly, explaining to the other children why Nomalanga was so distressed. The children then decided to perform a drama on the theme of stigmatisation and AIDS. This time, however, the roles were reversed, with Nomalanga playing the role of one of the children taunting a child who had lost her parents to AIDS. In this way, Nomalanga's humiliation was turned**

**into a positive learning experience for the whole group, who then staged it in other schools in the area.**

Lesbian girls may be subject to chronic and acute stress, related to their stigmatised social position. Coping strategies may involve alcohol and drug abuse, self-harming and contemplating suicide. The rate of suicide among lesbian girls is probably under-reported, because many will not have revealed their sexual orientation or family members may not be willing to reveal this information post-mortem. At an Australian conference entitled 'Young, gay, suicidal: who cares?' findings were presented that showed that within Australian society suicide is one of the recognised 'choices' open to young persons who become aware of their sexuality.<sup>34</sup> However, a recent American study showed that states that enacted gay rights laws saw a decrease in adolescent suicide.<sup>35</sup> Lesbian girls and transgendered teenagers may in fact be reluctant to engage with the very health services they need because of a historic lack of support.

## **7. Teenage girls and sex**

### **Beijing Platform for Action**

Reproductive health [...] implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so.<sup>36</sup>

Teenage girls have a right to a safe and satisfying sex life. They also have a right to safe sex and to refuse sex if they do not want it. Teenage girls all over the world are facing pressure to have sex. In many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, early marriage means that millions of girls engage in intercourse while they are or even before they become teenagers (see Chapter 2 – *Family Life* for more on early marriage). While the age of first intercourse in Sub-Saharan Africa is decreasing almost everywhere, sex outside marriage is still very uncommon among girls.



And the age of a girl's partner is important. The age difference between marriage and sexual partners is having a significant impact on HIV infection (see more details later in this chapter). A study of girls in the United States shows how the age difference in partners impacts on girls' sexual experiences at a young age – girls between the ages of 10 and 13 who are involved with an older boyfriend are more likely to be sexually experienced than those with a boyfriend of the same age.<sup>37</sup>

One consequence of intercourse is unplanned pregnancies in young women, occurring because they don't know or understand about menstruation, contraception and pregnancy. They may have difficulties using birth control because their families or partners object, or they may face contraceptive failure or sexual assault. The lower the age of first sexual activity, the more sexual partners a young woman is likely to have and the greater the risk of STIs.<sup>38</sup>

### Straight Talk – Talking to Both Girls and Boys About Sex<sup>39</sup>

*Straight Talk* is a monthly newspaper on health for secondary school students in Kampala, Uganda. It was first published in October 1993. Today, the Straight Talk Foundation produces 53 radio shows a week in 11 languages and about a dozen publications (some monthly, some termly) and consists of interactive face-to-face work in schools and communities. Its broad objective is “to contribute to the improved mental, social and physical development of Ugandan adolescents (10-19) and young adults (20-24). The programme also aims to keep its audience safe from sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and early pregnancy and to manage challenging circumstances such as conflict and deprivation.”

More specifically, Straight Talk Foundation aims, through its communications projects, to increase the understanding of adolescence, sexuality and reproductive health, and to promote the adoption of safer sex practices. The foundation also aims at helping adolescents acquire the necessary life skills and grasp

of child and human rights to assure a safe passage through adolescence. It covers issues such as virginity, abstinence, masturbation, relationships, the right to marry someone of your own choosing, condom use and living positively with HIV. Straight Talk clubs have been formed in schools to discuss issues that young people feel are important. A version of the magazine aimed at a younger audience, *Young Talk*, was started in 1998.

Young readers are positive about the project. One said: “Straight Talk has helped me to understand my body more and has helped me to make decisions, especially when it comes to sex.”

## 8. Reproductive health

*“The differences in reproductive health between the rich and the poor – both within and between countries – are larger than in any other area of health care.”*  
UN Millennium Project.<sup>40</sup>

We have seen in Chapter 1 – *Survival*, how more than half a million girls and women die unnecessarily from complications of pregnancy and childbirth. That is one woman a minute. Young women are the most vulnerable because their bodies are still not mature enough for child bearing. But this is only part of the story of girls' and women's reproductive health. According to some estimates, poor reproductive health results in 250 million years of productive life lost each year and reduces the overall productivity of women by as much as 20 per cent.<sup>41</sup>

- For every girl or woman who dies from complications of pregnancy, 20 or more are injured or disabled
- Two million girls and young women face social isolation due to obstetric fistula, a preventable and operable condition
- An estimated 201 million women lack access to effective contraceptives
- Ten to 14 per cent of girls and young women face unwanted pregnancies
- 4.4 million abortions are sought by teenage girls each year

- Every minute worldwide at least 10 girls aged 15 to 19 have an unsafe abortion. 68,000 girls and women die from unsafe abortions every year

The ability to control her own fertility is absolutely fundamental to a girl's or woman's empowerment and equality. “When a woman can plan her family, she can plan the rest of her life,” says Thoraya A Obaid, UNFPA Executive Director. “When she is healthy, she can be more productive. And when her reproductive rights are protected, she has freedom to participate more fully and equally in society. Reproductive rights are essential to women's advancement.”<sup>42</sup>

One in 10 births worldwide is to a mother who is still a child herself. Girls like Abeba in Ethiopia, who was married at seven and started having sex at the age of nine. She became pregnant, but after a difficult labour, lost the baby. Her husband died when she was 12. “I do not want to remarry”, she says. “I do not want any man to come near me.”<sup>43</sup>

Or Ganga, from Nepal, now aged 19, who says:

***“I married at age 12, before I even had my first period. I am from a lower caste family and I never attended school. We cannot afford nutritious food or a decent house to live in. I have three children – two daughters and a son. My last childbirth was especially difficult – I cannot describe for you how much I suffered during that time. I still feel weak and I look like an old woman. I have enormous awful days in my life.”***

More than 750,000 teenagers in the industrialised world will become mothers in the next year.<sup>44</sup> There are more teenage mothers in the US than in any other industrialised country. The rate is two and a half times that of the UK, 10 times that of Japan and the Netherlands and 17 times that of the Republic of Korea. A girl who has a baby as a teenager is more than twice as likely as her peers to end up living in poverty.<sup>45</sup> A longitudinal study in Britain showed that the risk of becoming a teenage mother is almost 10 times higher among women whose family is in the lowest social class than among those whose family is

in the highest class. In addition, teenagers who live in public housing are three times more likely to become mothers than their peers in owner-occupied housing.<sup>46</sup>

### American teen pregnancies<sup>47</sup>

- Each year, almost one million teenage women fall pregnant
- One in three girls becomes pregnant by the age of 20
- 78 per cent of these pregnancies are unplanned
- Each year, an estimated four million STIs occur among teenagers; rates of gonorrhoea and chlamydia are high compared to other countries

Discussing sex at home can help in promoting safer sex: the US Center for Disease Prevention found that adolescents whose mothers talked to them about condom use while they were still virgins were three times more likely to use condoms when they did have sex.<sup>48</sup>

And yet, in many countries, reproductive rights are being undermined. In the US, which has signed but not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a campaign exists to encourage state legislatures not to allow

*A young woman is examined in Sri Lanka. One in ten births worldwide is to a mother who is a child herself.*



LIBA TAYLOR

a woman under a certain age contraception without her parents' consent. The Center for Reproductive Rights notes: "These laws harm young women in numerous ways, including increasing the risk of potential physical and emotional abuse, interfering with access to confidential medical care, creating delays in access to medical care, and imposing forced teen motherhood."<sup>49</sup>

At the same time, teenage mothers are often the butt of negative stereotyping and social censure.

In the UK, the YWCA has been running a campaign called 'Respect Young Mums' to counter this tendency. It found that: "negative images of young mums put forward by politicians and the media have a damaging effect on how young mums are treated by the public and by professionals." Articles about young mothers in the media were three times more likely to be negative than positive.

Christina, 18, lives with her five-month-old daughter Kelci and Kelci's father in a council flat in Northampton. She says: "Life would be easier for young mums if they had equal rights. They could just get on with being a mother instead of fighting the system... you know, housing, social security, school. People should treat you with the respect you deserve and which older women automatically receive. It's tough being a young mum, but it's much tougher if people don't treat you equally."<sup>50</sup>

While young mothers like Christina feel they are not treated with respect because they are seen as too young to give birth, paradoxically, in many countries in the South, a young woman of her age would already be married and be expected to have children by this time. The negative reaction would come if she didn't have children, not if she did. What she would have in common with Christina is the lack of a right to choose what she feels is right for her.

#### **Stand up to end our suffering**

**Sophie Gbesso is a 19 year-old secondary school student at the Government Secondary school in Aplahoue, Benin. She is a member of the Kids Waves radio**

**programme in Benin which broadcasts about the rights of children all over West Africa. She is one of 30 young people who contributed to the development of Plan Benin's project on adolescent sexual health, which they called *Miaglo Vevi Sesse (Stand up to end our suffering)*. Having listed what she saw as the main problems young people in her area faced, this is what Sophie said:**

**"What can we do about this situation?**

**We first of all need to get together as a group and claim our rights. We want parents in our communities to stop abusing their children. We want them to give us the freedom to express ourselves. We need NGOs and we need the government to assist us. They should help us secure our rights and they should develop programmes that address our real issues. HIV prevention and sexual health promotion are all very interesting but they are only a small part of the problems we face as adolescents growing up in rural Benin.**

**"We want our government to be present in our communities. We want them to enforce the laws that protect the rights of children and young people. We want our government to work hand in hand with NGOs to create spaces for young people to meet, and to create services that meet the needs of young people.**

**"International donor agencies also have an important role. They should help finance those organisations and services that are responsive to our real needs. They should support our education system so we can have quality education in a safe environment. They should stop telling us what our problems are, and take us seriously when we tell them that our education, our health, and our sexual health are at risk because we have to walk for hours to get to school, and we don't have anything to eat until we get home in the evening."**

**Sophie took part in a documentary about adolescents in Couffo shown at the Toronto international conference on AIDS. She was one of six young people from Benin and Togo who authored an essay on adolescent sexual health. Her contribution was published in *The Lancet* in mid April 2006.<sup>51</sup>**

## **9. Abortion**

Adolescent girls are more likely to have an abortion than older women. Each year, 4.4 million young women aged between 15 and 19 have abortions – one in ten of all abortions.<sup>52</sup> Forty per cent of these are carried out under unsafe conditions.<sup>53</sup> Young women are more likely to seek an abortion late and to seek help from people who have no medical training, for fear of being found out. The World Health Organisation says: "It is believed that the majority of abortions for adolescents are carried out by unskilled staff in unsafe conditions."<sup>54</sup> These abortions are also more likely to pose a risk to the girls' lives. In Argentina and Chile, more than one-third of maternal deaths are to teenage mothers as a result of unsafe abortions. In Sub-Saharan Africa, up to 70 per cent of women who end up in hospital as a result of unsafe abortions are under 20 years old; in one Ugandan study, adolescents made up 60 per cent of deaths from unsafe abortions.<sup>55</sup>

In industrialised countries, the abortion rates for young women aged 15 to 19 range from 3 per 1,000 in Germany to 6 in Japan, 19 in England and Wales, to a high of 36 per 1,000 in the US.<sup>56</sup>

Teenage girls seek abortions for a number of reasons, some of which are specific to their age:

- Fear of upsetting parents or bringing shame to the family
- Fear of expulsion from home, school or work
- No stable relationship
- No money to care for a child
- The desire to complete their education before having a baby
- Fear of not finding someone who will marry them if they have a child

- Not liking the father of their child
- Becoming pregnant as a result of incest or sexual abuse
- Not using contraceptives or contraceptive failure.

Twenty-six per cent of the world's population lives in one of the 72 countries where abortion is illegal. Most of the other countries also have some form of restriction. This figure is changing all the time, and in the current climate, this is often in the direction of more restrictions.

#### **Min Min's story**

**Min Min Lama, a young woman in Nepal, was sexually abused by her sister-in-law's brother and became pregnant at the age of 13. Her abuser was charged with rape but released. Min Min was imprisoned after her family arranged for her to have an abortion, because her sister-in-law reported this to the police. At that time, abortion was illegal and Min Min, now aged 16, was sentenced to 12 years in prison. Two-thirds of all Nepali women in prison were there because of abortion.**

**Thanks to the efforts of women's advocacy organisations in Nepal, in September 2002, abortion was made legal during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and up to 18 weeks in cases of rape, incest, fetal impairment or to protect a woman's health. Min Min has now been freed.<sup>57</sup>**

## **10. Obstetric fistula**

Two million women live with a chronic condition that ruins their lives. Many of them acquire the condition at a young age. They have an obstetric fistula, an opening inside the vagina through which there is a continuous leakage of urine or faeces. Obstetric fistulae result from prolonged labour in childbirth, and are common in very young mothers and in women who have undergone infibulations, the most severe type of genital cutting. Often their baby has died. The grieving mother is often thrown out by her husband and family

and lives in poverty and isolation. And yet fistula is both preventable and operable.

In 2003 the UNFPA launched the Campaign to End Fistula which currently covers over 30 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and the Arab States.

**Najwa’s story**  
Najwa, 24, has suffered from fistula for most of her adult life. Married at 17, she became pregnant right away. No-one told her how many things could go wrong during childbirth, and she was alone when her labour began. A day, or traditional birth attendant, was sent for on the second day. After four agonising days of pushing, Najwa was taken to the regional hospital. But it was too late. The baby was delivered stillborn, and Najwa had developed a fistula. Her husband abandoned her, refusing to take her back because she was leaking urine. Fortunately, Najwa’s family took her in. Three months later, she made an arduous journey across the desert to Khartoum, where one of the only fistula centres in Sudan is located. Because the damage she sustained was so severe, the first surgery did not correct the problem. It was several years before Najwa could afford to make the long trip again. This time the surgery was successful, and she can now return home. But she has no intention of remarrying. Instead, she says, she will help her brother and his wife raise their children.<sup>58</sup>

11. Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Worldwide, women contract sexually transmitted infections (STIs) at more than five times the rate of men. STIs are the second-most important cause of diseases for women aged 15-44 in developing countries. In addition, having one or more STIs increases the risk of becoming infected with HIV by two to nine times. STIs occur most often in young people between the ages

of 15 and 24. Every day, more than 500,000 young people are infected.<sup>59</sup> Young women are particularly susceptible by virtue of their age and the fact that they are vulnerable biologically, culturally and socio-economically. The majority of STIs do not have any symptoms in women (60-70 per cent of gonococcal and chlamydial infections), are difficult to diagnose, and have serious and long-term complications, such as pelvic inflammatory disease, cervical cancer, and ectopic pregnancy. Young women are also less likely to seek treatment because they do not know they are infected, because there is nowhere they can go, or because they cannot afford treatment. There is also a stigma attached to having an STI which might prevent a young woman telling anyone she thinks she is infected.

12. HIV and AIDS

Millennium Development Goals

Goal 6  
To halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015.

*“The AIDS epidemic cannot be understood, nor can effective responses be developed, without taking into account the fundamental ways that gender influences the spread of the disease, its impact, and the success of prevention efforts.”*  
UN Millennium Project <sup>60</sup>

The AIDS epidemic continues to grow, with UNAIDS reporting 39.5 million people living with HIV in 2006. There were 4.3 million new infections, 65 per cent of these in Sub-Saharan Africa. But they are also increasing elsewhere: in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, infection rates have increased by as much as 50 per cent since 2004. Women made up 17.7 million (48 per cent) of those infected, and children under 15, 2.3 million.<sup>61</sup>

The figures for young women are much worse than those for young men – an estimated 7.3 million young women are living with HIV and AIDS, compared to 4.5 million young men. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the face of HIV is female. Fifty nine per cent of people living with the

virus in the region are women. And young women between the ages of 15 and 24 are between two and six times as likely to be HIV-positive than young men of the same age.<sup>62</sup> Two thirds of newly infected youth aged 15-19 in sub-Saharan Africa are female.

More than half a million children under 15 died of HIV in 2006. A young person under 15 is said to contract HIV every 15 seconds. An estimated 530,000 children under 15 were newly infected with HIV in 2006, mainly through mother-to-child transmission. Without treatment, 50 per cent of infected infants will die before their second birthday.<sup>63</sup>

Sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the worst hit. 85 per cent of all children under 15 living with the disease and 57 per cent of child deaths from HIV are in Africa. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, around 75 per cent of the reported infections between 2000 and 2004 were in people younger than 30 years (in Western Europe, the corresponding figure was 33 per cent).<sup>64</sup>

Thankfully, infection rates have declined in some countries, with young people in particular showing positive trends in their sexual behaviours – increased use of condoms, delaying the age they first have sex, and having fewer sexual partners. HIV prevalence among young people has declined in Botswana, Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.<sup>65</sup>

Why are girls more vulnerable? The reasons

are partly to do with their physiology – the biological risk of HIV transmission during vaginal intercourse is higher for women than for men because the wall of the vagina is delicate and abrasion can cause entry of the virus. But once again, their lack of status in society, and the discrimination and powerlessness that girls face, make them more vulnerable. Often girls do not know how to prevent the disease even if they had the power to do so. Fewer than one-third of young women aged 15-24 in Sub-Saharan Africa fully understand how to avoid HIV infection.<sup>66</sup> Early marriage, sexual abuse, lack of education and economic means, the inability to negotiate sex and contraception, all make girls more at risk of infection than boys. The biggest risk factor for girls, by far, is inter-generational sex. The large age difference between sexual partners is driving the epidemic among girls and young women because their partners are more likely to be sexually experienced, and therefore infected. Research from South Africa confirms how culturally-sanctioned gender roles foster the power imbalances that facilitate young women’s risks, for example, women have few options for exercising personal control in their sexual relationships.<sup>67</sup>

The consequences of the epidemic are severe for girls. They are more likely than boys to drop out of school to look after siblings if their parents are sick or die. By the year 2020, a quarter of all children in medium-prevalence countries

Young women and young men living with HIV (aged 15-24)			
	Total	Proportion Young Women	Proportion Young men
Sub-Saharan Africa	8,600,000	67	33
North Africa and the Middle East	160,000	41	59
East Asia and the Pacific	740,000	49	51
South Asia	1,100,000	62	38
Central Asia and Eastern Europe	430,000	35	65
Latin America and the Caribbean	560,000	31	69
Industrialised countries	240,000	33	67
World	11,800,000	62	38

UNICEF/UNAIDS/WHO, 2006.



are expected to have one parent with HIV by the time they are five years old. The number of orphaned children is decreasing in all parts of the world apart from Sub-Saharan Africa, where 12.3 per cent of children (43 million) are orphaned. This number is projected to reach 50 million by 2010. 25% of them are orphaned as a result of the HIV epidemic.<sup>68</sup> Fewer than 10 per cent of the children who have been orphaned by AIDS receive any public support or services.<sup>69</sup> In addition, children affected by HIV and AIDS are more likely to suffer from exclusion and discrimination and to be affected by poverty when they lose the family wage earner.

#### Proscovia's story <sup>70</sup>

Proscovia is 17. She lives in Uganda and has just completed her O levels. She talked to Straight Talk's student journalists: *"My mother died when I was 13. I was the one in the hospital washing her and taking care of her. She didn't tell me that she had HIV. I found out from my dad. She died in 2000. My brother died when he was eight in 2001 and my sister died when she was six in 2002.*

*"I was also born with the virus but I lived without getting sick until I was in secondary school. Then I got very sick. I weighed only 32 kgs. At first I hated and stigmatised myself. Most of the time I would sit away from my friends and cry. But then I got counselling and it changed my life. I am now on anti-retrovirals and doing well. My advice to fellow youth is: 'Avoid self-stigma. Feel free and get counselling.' I am not planning to get married. I do not want to infect anyone. If I get a job, I'll just stay with that."*

Around 700,000 children are in need of anti-retroviral drugs for HIV. Without preventive measures, about 35 per cent of children born to HIV-positive mothers will contract the virus during birth. But fewer than 10 per cent of pregnant women are being offered preventive services to stop them passing on the disease to their babies.<sup>71</sup>

#### HIV and peer education in China

In China, the numbers of girls and women with HIV are increasing. A total of 650,000 people are infected. Between 2002 and 2004 the percentage of women as against men with the disease rose from 25 to 29 per cent. Zhang Xueqi is one of a group of students in Hefei, the capital of Anhui province in eastern China, who are tackling the threat of HIV/AIDS through games, drama and peer education. "HIV/AIDS is becoming a big problem in China and more and more people are paying attention to it. In the old days, people were scared of this disease and even now only a few people can face it reasonably. That's why we were trained as peer educators, so that we can help to change people's thoughts about HIV/AIDS.

"We spent a day playing games with university students and our English teacher Ms Liu. We learned a lot about HIV prevention and how to run workshops with our own classes. At first we were very embarrassed talking about how HIV/AIDS is transmitted, especially us girls. But doing the peer education has given us more confidence. Last year we put on a play about dating. There were two couples, where both of the boys were trying to persuade the girls to go with them. There were two endings. One girl refused the boy and the other agreed to go with him. Through this we were trying to change attitudes. It's not just about getting knowledge, it's how we use it too."<sup>72</sup>

The UN estimated in 2006 that a total of \$1.6 billion was needed to provide support to children affected by HIV and AIDS, although once again this is not differentiated between girls and boys. However, Save the Children Fund estimated that at the time of the 16th International AIDS Conference in August 2006, only 25 per cent of the money needed had



SVEN TORFINN

*These children in Uganda lost their mother to AIDS. Women and girls are physiologically and socially more vulnerable to HIV infection than their male counterparts.*

been committed. In addition to resources, UNICEF's Unite Against AIDS Campaign has identified Four Ps which "will make a real difference in the lives and life chances of children affected by AIDS":

- Prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV. By 2010, offer appropriate services to 80 per cent of women in need.
- Provide pediatric treatment. By 2010, provide either anti-retroviral treatment or cotrimoxazole, or both, to 80 per cent of children in need.
- Prevent infection among adolescents and young people. By 2010, reduce the percentage of young people living with HIV by 25 per cent globally.
- Protect and support children affected by HIV/AIDS. By 2010, reach 80 per cent of children most in need.<sup>73</sup>

For girls, specifically, what will make the biggest difference in terms of reducing the incidence of HIV is the opportunity to negotiate when and how they have sex. This will only happen when they take, or are given, the power to do this, which means ensuring that they are not forced into sex by poverty, or custom, or culture. Once again, education is the key. A study in the British journal *The Lancet* noted that: "Studies of HIV in Africa and Latin America have shown that women's education lowers their risk of HIV infection and prevalence of risky behaviours associated with sexually transmitted infections including HIV, and increases their ability to discuss HIV with a partner, ask for condom use, or negotiate sex with a spouse. Primary education has a substantial positive effect on knowledge of HIV prevention and condom use, but secondary education has an even greater effect. Girls who attend secondary school are far more likely to understand the costs of risky behaviour and even to know effective refusal tactics in difficult sexual situations."<sup>74</sup>

Increases in the numbers of those receiving ARV (anti-retroviral) treatment will also make a big difference. The figures in low and middle income countries are still low, for example in 2005 only nine per cent of pregnant women

with HIV were receiving ARVs for preventing transmission to their children. However, this was an increase from three per cent in 2003. And some countries have seen big improvements in this area: in Namibia, the percentage of HIV-infected pregnant women who received ARVs increased from six per cent in 2004 to 29 per cent in 2005. In South Africa the percentage increased from 22 per cent in 2004 to 30 per cent in 2005.<sup>75</sup>

Young women themselves are asking for youth-friendly services, which can inform young people about their sexual and reproductive health rights and provide wider access to voluntary counselling and testing. They want affordable health services that cater for young people whether they are married or not, offer low-cost or free condoms and provide treatment for sexually transmitted infections. They want guaranteed confidentiality, flexible opening hours (to cater for young people who work and study), and free voluntary counselling and testing and anti-retrovirals for all.<sup>76</sup>

### 13. What still needs to be done?

Women, and young women in particular, face a range of health problems that can be linked directly to the fact that they are still the second sex. An article in the British journal *The Lancet* points out that: "Long-term and sustained improvements in women's health require rectification of the inequalities and disadvantages that women and girls face in education and economic opportunity".<sup>77</sup> If you are a woman, and young, and poor, you are also vulnerable in terms of your health.

Globally, there has been some progress made on improving girls' and women's health, although the lack of disaggregated data on the health concerns that disproportionately affect girls and women can make the picture unclear.

**Some initiatives that are working are:**

- Efforts to ensure that girls are better nourished, have equal access to clean water, and are looked after as well as their brothers would prevent the diseases

of poor nutrition being passed on from generation to generation. School feeding programmes with iron fortification work well for girls in secondary school

- Providing young women with access to quality, girl-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, including information, counselling, and better technology (including diagnostics and preventative). Sexual health education delays the onset of sexual activity and helps young people to avoid risky behaviour when they do have sex
- Unsafe abortions lead to teenage deaths. Therefore steps to ensure that young women can prevent undesirable pregnancies are necessary. Wherever girls have to resort to abortion, their life and health should not be put at risk
- Government and community actions against early marriage and female genital cutting are working (see more detail in Chapter 2 – Family Life)
- Girls and young women, who often feel under pressure from the images portrayed in the mass media, suggest that they need positive information for a better self image. The media can itself play an important role by informing young people about important reproductive health concerns and where to obtain services

### 14. Girls' voices

*"We do not have access to contraception. We are stigmatised if we have a child before marriage. We do not have the right to abortion. What a dilemma! How can we not die if we are exposed to risky abortions? How can we not resort to abortion if a child before marriage is a sacrilege? How can we avoid having children when there are no contraceptive services? We wish to affirm that one of the best weapons in the fight against risky abortions among the young is to respect our rights, starting with the right to information."*

Brison Ebaya, DR Congo<sup>78</sup>

*"Reproductive health and sexuality... is not discussed adequately in school and not even at home. Certain behaviours of male members of our communities lead our (girls') lives into risk situations. But such things are always kept at a low level and are not able to be reported due to cultural constraints. Although these situations put our lives into unbearable status, such situations continue without being addressed."*

Champi, aged 15 years, Sri Lanka<sup>79</sup>

*"Girls are the ones that are involved in cleaning the surroundings and disposing rubbish. Most times girls contract deadly diseases while disposing waste. They contract diseases like cholera which kills in a short time."*

Judith, aged 14, Zambia.<sup>80</sup>





# Making a living

## Seventy per cent of the 1.5 billion people living on \$1 a day or less are female

### 1. Introduction

#### Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 32

1. States Parties recognise the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has a number of Conventions that relate to work and young women:

- ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No 111)
- ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No 100)
- ILO Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156)
- ILO Maternity Protection Conventions, 2000 (No 183)
- International Labour Conference Resolution on Gender Equality, Pay Equity and Maternity Protection, 2004

*"It is a moment for which we have waited for over 200 years. Never losing faith, we waited through the many years of struggle to achieve*

*our rights. But women were not just waiting; women were working. Never losing faith, we worked to redeem the promise of America that all men and women are created equal. For our daughters and our granddaughters, today we have broken the marble ceiling. For our daughters and our granddaughters, the sky is the limit. Anything is possible for them."*  
Nancy Pelosi, on her election as the first woman Speaker of the US House of Representatives, January 2007<sup>1</sup>

The last decade has opened up a multitude of possibilities for many young women. More are in paid work than ever before, and in some countries they are entering professions that traditionally used to be regarded as 'men's jobs'. As a result, they are gaining in confidence and many are making their voices heard on the world arena. But as ever with a group who are trying to break into new areas, this is not always easy. And as we have seen in chapter two on family life, girls and women who work are generally doing so in addition to the hours they put in at home.

The reality for the vast majority of girls and young women in the world is an invisible and undervalued contribution to the economy, both in cash and in kind. And 70 per cent of the 1.5 billion people living on \$1 a day or less are female. Their contributions include unpaid household work, traditional (female) work





More women and girls are earning a living than ever before, but much female work is still traditional and unpaid.

such as the *devdasi* or temple prostitution system in India where girls are sent away from the family home to work as sex workers, and paid work to mitigate the economic vulnerability of being poor.

Children are paid very little to work long hours in poor conditions; others have to leave their homes and even their countries in order to find work, and then there are many who are unable to find work. While new legislation and social protection measures brought in over the last 15 years now exist to protect children from working at an early age, or working instead of going to school, or being exploited in factories or as domestic labour, many children still work in such conditions. Thousands more are trafficked against their will, often to work in the sex trade, or are sexually exploited.

There has been a big debate over whether children should work at all, and this continues, as well as discussions about the push factors such as poverty, and family expectations that lead children to work rather than go to school. Although child work can help secure income for the family and even build children's skills, dangerous and exploitative child labour can damage their health and keep them out of school.<sup>2</sup> Girls are more at risk of falling into exploitative situations, therefore efforts are

needed to protect them from harmful labour.

There have been many achievements, largely driven by women themselves refusing to take no for an answer. But it will be some time before the sky is the limit not just for some young women in the United States, but for girls and young women all over the world.

## 2. Paid work

At first glance, the future of paid work for young women looks bright. More women are earning a living than ever before, ideally giving them a route to economic independence that will allow them more say over their lives. Since the 1980s the numbers of women in the paid work force have grown faster than the numbers of men in every region of the world except Africa. In Latin America the growth rate for women has been three times that of men, while in the European Union 80 per cent of all growth in the labour force has been attributed to women's participation. The ILO's *Global Employment Trends for Women* (2004) states that the gap in the labour force participation rate for men and women has been decreasing in all regions over the past decade, although another survey points out that labour force participation rates are still

lower for young women than young men, particularly in South Asia.<sup>3,4</sup> New industries, such as information and communication technologies (ICTs), have opened up new possibilities of work for young women. In some countries, particularly in South Asia, ICTs have created new types of work that favour women, often because it can be done from home. Most of these jobs are in service industries, banking, insurance, printing and publishing. Women – often young women – are employed in call centres or data processing. The International Labour Organisation reports that telecentres and fax booths have created a quarter of a million jobs in India in the last four years alone, a huge proportion of which have gone to women.<sup>5</sup> However, although many women are software programmers, very few are in hardware design. Nor are many involved at policy level; mostly they are involved at quite a low level.

All too often, paid work can simply mean a different form of exploitation. Despite their increasing participation in the workforce, women are still poorer than men. Anwarul K. Chowdhury, United Nations Under-Secretary-

General notes that: “No poverty reduction strategy in Least Developed Countries could be successful without the creation of productive employment with special attention to women and the youth.” In fact, the gap between women and men in poverty has continued to widen, in a phenomenon that has become known as the ‘feminisation of poverty’.<sup>6</sup>

Worldwide, women only earn between 30 and 60 per cent of men's earnings.<sup>7</sup> Equal pay is still not a reality, even in the rich world.

In addition, many of the jobs done by women are badly paid, insecure and part-time. In 2000, in Japan and the US almost 70 per cent of all part-time workers were women. In France almost half the 29 per cent of women working part-time are on short-term temporary contracts.<sup>9</sup> Sometimes this is by choice, but often it is because this is the only work women can find.

Women tend to work longer hours than men because they are also juggling childcare and unpaid work in the home. Surveys in six states in India showed that women typically spend 35 hours a week on household tasks and caring for children. Men only spend four hours on these tasks.<sup>10</sup>

And discrimination on the part of employers continues to be rife: Human Rights Watch<sup>11</sup> lists a litany of problems related to the abusive and sexist practices of both corporations and private individuals when it comes to employing women:

- Job advertisements in Ukraine often specify ‘man’ among the requirements for work in business and government agencies, and employers often deny women employment based on age and marital status and family status.
- Private manufacturing companies in Mexico, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic routinely oblige female job applicants to undergo pregnancy examinations as a condition of work and deny work to pregnant women.
- South African farm owners deny black female farm workers legal contracts, pay them less than men for similar work, and deny them maternity benefits.

The ratio of estimated female earned income to estimated male earned income, 1991-2003, selected countries <sup>8</sup>	
Canada	0.63
Chile	0.39
China	0.64
Côte d'Ivoire	0.32
Indonesia	0.45
India	0.31
Japan	0.44
Kuwait	0.37
Lebanon	0.31
Russia	0.62
South Africa	0.45
Sweden	0.81
Uganda	0.70
Thailand	0.59
US	0.62
UK	0.65

UNDP Human Development Report, 2006

- Guatemala’s labour code denies live-in domestic workers equal rights. Many of these are indigenous women.
- Sexual harassment and violence in the workplace are common and constant threats to working women’s lives and livelihoods. Female migrant workers in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia are especially vulnerable to abuse.

If women fare less well than men, young women as a group do even worse. They may even be recruited precisely because it is felt that they can be more easily laid off than men. As new entrants to the labour market, they tend to be the first to lose their jobs and the last to be rehired. Ironically, the fact that their mothers are now working may even mean that eldest daughters in particular are at greatest risk of being withdrawn from school or work in order to look after siblings while the mother is away from the house.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. New opportunities?

Globalisation has meant new opportunities for young women. In many countries of the South, young women are employed in factories. This is partly because they are considered more amenable than men and can be paid less for working long hours. But such openings have also meant new opportunities: in one survey of young female workers in Bangladesh’s exclusively female garment factories,<sup>13</sup> researchers found that: “Despite the stigma and physical stress associated with garment work, most young women reported that they value the work and the independence associated with it and feel that it is less of a hardship than agricultural work.” Most contributed to the family income, which gave them more status at home. The researchers concluded that “this new opportunity for work has created a period of adolescence for young girls that did not previously exist as a life cycle phase.”

Working outside the home may also give young women more confidence and self-esteem. A small study in Argentina of the views of young people in their mid-twenties on the criteria for defining adulthood<sup>14</sup> found that 90 per cent of young women (as opposed to 65 per

cent of young men) viewed ‘women’s capability of supporting a family financially as a marker of adulthood’. In countries like Bangladesh, where young women are typically confined to the home, the large numbers of young women going out to work is likely to have a significant effect on their ability to make their own life choices. In Egypt, however, young women tend to stop working once they are married.

But it may also mean that young women are exploited. They work long hours for little money, sometimes in appalling conditions, like this young woman in Bangladesh:

**Nasrin Akther<sup>15</sup>**

*“Until recently, I had to work from 8am until 10pm each day. We get only two days off a month. I walk to work and back because I cannot afford to take a bus or bicycle rickshaw. The factory is three kilometres away and it takes 30 minutes to walk. I normally get home at 10.30pm.*

*“I get a regular wage of 1,650 taka (£18.68 a month or nine pence an hour), not counting overtime. We pay 200 taka for rent and 800 for food each month. Usually I spend about 400 taka a month on soap, detergent, toothpaste and things like that. Occasionally, I buy some extra thing like fruit, biscuits, bus fare – but not frequently.*

*“If we want to use the bathroom, we have to get permission from the supervisor and he monitors the time. If someone makes a mistake, the supervisor docks four or five hours of overtime wage, or lists her as absent, taking the whole day’s wage.*

*“In my factory there is no childcare, no medical facilities. The women don’t receive maternity benefits. We have to work overtime, but we are always cheated on our overtime pay... it is very crowded, very hot and badly ventilated. The water we have to drink is dirty. The workers often suffer from diarrhoea, jaundice, kidney problems, anaemia, and*

*eye pain. Our seats have no backs and since we have to work long hours, we suffer from backaches and shoulder pain.*

*“I cannot support myself with the wage I am getting. I have rice and lentils for breakfast, rice and mashed potato for lunch, and for supper rice and vegetables. I eat chicken once a month when I get paid, and maybe twice a month I buy a small piece of fish.*

*“Because we have to work very long hours, seven days a week, we have no family life, no personal life, no social life.”*

### 4. Men’s jobs, women’s jobs

Young women may also find it difficult to break into what are traditionally considered ‘men’s jobs’. Research by Britain’s Equal Opportunities Commission between 2003 and 2005 showed that not only is there still a gender pay gap in the UK, of 18 per cent for women working full time and 41 per cent for those working part-time, but three-quarters of working women are still found in five occupational groups. The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) calls these “the five ‘c’s – cleaning, catering, caring, cashiering and clerical”. These jobs, which are often classified as ‘women’s work’, are paid less than the equivalent ‘man’s job’, even when both require similar qualification levels. One major cause of girls being in these groups is because they choose certain subjects at school. The EOC said: “There is a clear financial incentive for women to choose training and work in sectors where men dominate the workforce, as pay tends to be higher in those areas”.<sup>16</sup>

**Emily the engineer**

**Emily, an engineering student in Edinburgh in Scotland, is one young woman who has chosen her career in an area not traditionally considered ‘women’s work’:**

*“Office jobs just didn’t appeal to me. I remember my careers test saying I should be a hairdresser! That didn’t appeal either.*

*I was interested in science, maths and the environment and after doing some research myself decided to become a civil engineer. At university I was one of only three girls doing engineering, and it was difficult sometimes but we had a female lecturer who was very inspiring and always managed to motivate me. I am still really enjoying the training and learning and have got to do a lot of practical experience, which I love. The experience is as vital as the degree so I would advise anyone to get as much experience as possible whilst they are young. It can be difficult working in an area dominated by men; however I am passionate about what I do and that shines through to others. I hope I am leading the way and soon others will follow.”<sup>17</sup>*

### 5. Migration

Between 185 and 192 million migrants live outside their country of birth. About half are women. Many have left their children behind with sisters, mothers or daughters, in order to earn a living overseas. In the Philippines, for example, an estimated 3 million to 6 million children (10 to 20 per cent of all under-18s) have been left by parents working overseas.<sup>18</sup>

Young people all over the world leave their homes as young adults to migrate to a new village, city or country. Some leave to marry or find an education; most leave to work. Young people between the ages of 15 and 30 are the most likely to migrate. In one Kenyan study, over 10 per cent of Kenyan young men and women in their late teens and early twenties moved across district boundaries in a single year. Young women migrated at greater rates than young men between the ages of 15 and 20. Similar patterns were also observed in a study in Brazil.<sup>19</sup>

Few statistics exist on why young people migrate. The census in Mexico is one that does collect such data. It shows that about 53 percent of men and 34 percent of women aged between 20 and 24 gave work-related

Reasons for Migration by Age and Sex, Mexico 2000 <sup>21</sup>						
Reason	Age 10–14		Age 15–19		Age 20–24	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Look for work	6.8	6.9	31.0	29.1	42.6	27.2
Change workplace	4.2	4.5	5.9	4.4	10.9	6.4
Study	6.4	6.4	12.6	10.6	10.8	8.9
Reunite family	46.8	47.1	28.6	27.5	18.2	21.8
Get married	0.1	0.4	1.0	11.4	5.3	22.8
Health reasons	2.4	2.0	1.3	1.1	0.9	1.1
Violence or safety	4.0	3.7	2.7	1.7	1.3	1.2
Other reasons	29.4	29.0	17.0	14.3	10.2	10.6

Growing up Global: the Changing Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries, CB Lloyd (ed), 2005.

reasons for migration. About 23 percent of women ages 20-24 said they migrated to get married or form a union, compared with only 5 percent of men. A similar proportion migrated for education. These results show that while migrating for work purposes is more important for men, it is still the reason why a significant number of young women leave their homes.<sup>20</sup>

### 6. Unemployment

Young people between 15 and 24 make up half the world’s unemployed. And young women’s unemployment exceeds that of young men in all regions of the South with the exception of East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>22</sup>

Percentage of labour force aged 15-19 <sup>23</sup>		
More developed countries		
	1990	2005
Young women	32	27
Young men	36	30
Less developed countries		
Young women	48	41
Young men	59	50

Youth in a Global World, Population Reference Council 2005

**Working against young women’s poverty<sup>24</sup>**  
 Tap and Reposition Youth (TRY) is a project in Kenya that tries to address young women’s poverty and lack of

**employment opportunities. TRY works with girls aged between 16 and 22 in low-income and slum areas of Nairobi. It is a livelihoods project, that started with a basic lending and savings scheme and moved on to giving social support and responding to individual needs. In 2004 Young Savers Clubs were set up for younger women, who formed themselves into groups of 20 to 25 members and held weekly meetings led by a credit officer or mentor. One young woman saver, aged 19, said: “I tried [saving money] at home many times, but I see something like shoes and I break the tin and use it [the money]. With Young Savers, the money is safe because it is in the bank. It cannot be given to someone else, like my husband when he sees something he wants to buy with my money.” TRY loans have financed a wide range of business ventures run by young women in the slum areas around Nairobi, including:**

- A hairdressing salon
- A fruit-juice business
- A meat selling business
- Buying and selling firewood
- A second hand clothing business

Club members also appreciate making friends and being able to learn: “What attracted me, apart from saving, are the seminars. I especially like the way we

are taught about how to run businesses and about nutrition and keeping fit. We do exercises for about 20 minutes. In the group, problems – even individual problems – are less troublesome when we share them,” said one woman aged 20.

### 7. Child labour

#### Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 15: Child Labour  
 Every child shall be protected from all forms of economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

States Parties shall in particular:  
 (a) provide through legislation, minimum ages for admission to every employment;  
 (b) provide for appropriate regulation of hours and conditions of employment;  
 (c) provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective enforcement of this Article;  
 (d) promote the dissemination of information on the hazards of child labour to all sectors of the community.

**“There is a saying that goes: ‘The youth is the hope of the nation’. How can we build a good and progressive nation if our children are forced to stop schooling because of work? How can we build a bright tomorrow if we are not given a bright today?”**

**Analou**, 16, Vice President, Barangay Cabayugan Active Children’s Association, the Philippines<sup>25</sup>

It is a fact that many thousands of girls under 18 work in order to earn money. Some of them combine work and school to earn a bit extra for themselves and for their families. Others work long hours in mines or in agriculture or as domestic workers from a very early age. The International Labour Organisation and UNICEF

distinguish between child work, child labour, and hazardous child labour (see box below). There is of course a big difference between Sarah, aged 16, in Canada who earns some pocket money with a Saturday job and Mili, aged 10, a domestic worker in Indonesia who works long hours for little pay and lives away from her family. According to the ILO definition, Sarah would fall into the first category; Mili into the second or even the third. The issue of child labour has led to many debates, from those who want to ban child work altogether to children’s movements such as the African Movement of Working Children and Youth who want the right to work. An essential difference between international standards and the basis of the Movement’s work is that the children are primarily concerned with working conditions, while international standards focus on work sectors.

#### Definitions of child work versus child labour

**Child work:** Children’s participation in economic activity that does not negatively affect their health and development or interfere with education, can be positive. Work that does not interfere with education (light work) is permitted from the age of 12 years under the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 138, Minimum Age Convention.

**Child labour:** This is more narrowly defined and refers to children working in contravention of the above standards as defined in ILO Convention 138. It includes all children below 12 years of age working in any economic activities, those aged 12 to 14 years engaged in harmful work, and all children engaged in the worst forms of child labour.<sup>27</sup>

**Worst forms of child labour:** These involve, under ILO Convention 182, children being enslaved, forcibly recruited, prostituted, trafficked, forced into illegal activities and exposed to hazardous work.<sup>28</sup> Hazardous work includes “any activity or occupation that by its nature or type leads to adverse effects on the child’s safety, physical or mental health, or moral development”.<sup>29</sup> This includes mining or construction, work with heavy machinery or pesticides. It also applies to any child under 18 working more than 43 hours a week.



**The African Movement of Working Children and Youth**  
Since 2003, Plan has supported the development of the African Movement of Working Children and Youth, a movement of 450 child-led groups/clubs in 19 African countries. The Movement has a gender balance of 53 per cent girls, 47 per cent boys. Domestic workers, vendors, apprentices and self-employed children on the street are active members of these groups that have organised themselves into a formalised structure.

These children consider that they have to work, due to their social and economic conditions, and that their work is part of their struggle to overcome the poverty they face. They have developed a framework of 12 basic rights they would like to see realised. The right to:

- be respected
- self expression and to form organisations
- learn to read and write
- remain in the village (avoid urban migration)
- be listened to
- equitable legal aid
- rest when sick
- healthcare
- light and limited work
- work in a safe environment
- play

Their perspective is not theoretical, it is rooted in their own lives, and they want to build a better present and future for themselves and their younger sisters and brothers in order to ‘blossom out’.<sup>26</sup>

The International Labour Organisation estimates that 217.7 million children between the ages of five and 17 were engaged in child labour in 2004. The largest proportion – 122 million – live in Asia and the Pacific, 49.3 million in Sub-Saharan Africa, and 5.7 million in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>30</sup>

Nearly 70 per cent of children engaged in child labour are working in hazardous

Girls in hazardous child labour (millions) <sup>31</sup>	
Trafficked	1.2
Debt bondage or other forms of slavery	5.7
Prostitution or pornography	1.8
Armed conflict	0.3
Other illicit activities	0.6
<b>Total (millions)</b>	<b>9.6</b>

Instraw, The Girl Child, 2004

Wary young fruit-sellers at work in Sierra Leone.



conditions. Girls may be sold into bonded labour, or to traffickers for sexual slavery in order to pay off their parents’ debts, pay medical fees for a member of the family or to add to household income.

Children who work face another danger too: they often miss out on education, which, as we have seen in Chapter 3 – *Education*, is particularly crucial for girls’ empowerment. Girls often start work at a younger age. This may affect boys’ and girls’ future earning capacity

differently – one study in Brazil found that in rural areas, girls who began working at the age of seven earned 55 per cent less than if they had begun working at age 15 or older, whereas for boys the difference is only 23 percent.<sup>32</sup>

There is not a huge difference between the number of boys and the number of girls working; the gap widens as the age of the child increases: by 15 – 17, girls make up only one-third of those in that age group in paid work, as girls are married or kept at home for domestic tasks.

Girls perform a variety of different kinds of work, including agricultural, textile, factory, informal and domestic labour, sex work, not to mention unpaid household and care-giving duties. The majority of children who work – 69 per cent – do so in agriculture. This can involve long hours in the fields, often hard physical labour, sometimes dealing with dangerous chemicals. Rural children, and girls in particular, may start work at the age of five or six. In some countries, children under 10 account for up to 20 per cent of child workers in rural areas.<sup>35</sup> Much of this work is difficult to identify, partly because children may work as part of family units or on family farms and because agriculture as a sector is not well regulated. Twenty-two per cent of child workers are involved in services – this would include the many girls who work as domestic servants. Others work in industry, in factories producing toys or carpets, many for Western consumption.

**Sok Keng – Cambodia**  
**Sok Keng is 14 and lives in a small village outside Phnom Penh. She knew from an early age that she would have to work to help her family to survive. She was very young when she went to work in a nearby garment factory. In Cambodia, the garment industry contributes over \$1.6 billion to the economy. It employs 200,000 workers, most of whom are women, who are able to support their families on their wages.**

**The ILO has been working with the Cambodian government to identify underage workers like Sok Keng, who are placed in training centres and given the skills to get a good job in the industry once she is legally able to work.**<sup>36</sup>

The ILO statistics for 2000-2004 show that the global number of child labourers in the age group 5 to 17 fell by 11 per cent, from 246 million in 2000 to 218 million in 2004.<sup>37</sup> This is encouraging, as the numbers of children working in the most hazardous forms of labour appear to be particularly reduced. The drop was

Percentage of children engaged in child labour in the developing world <sup>33</sup>		
	Girls	Boys
Sub-Saharan Africa	34	37
Eastern and Southern Africa	29	34
West and Central Africa	41	41
Middle East and N Africa	7	9
South Asia	15	14
East Asia and Pacific (excl. China)	10	11
Latin America and Caribbean	8	11
<b>All developing countries (excl. China)</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>All least developed countries</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>29</b>
Hagemann et al, Global Child Labour Trends, 2000-2004, 2006		

Child labour and sex distribution <sup>34</sup>	
Sex and age group	Distribution by sex (%)
<b>5-14</b>	
Boys	51.3
Girls	48.7
<b>15- 17</b>	
Boys	62.0
Girls	37.9
<b>Total 5 – 17</b>	
Boys	53.8
Girls	46.2
Ibid	

greatest in Latin America and the Caribbean, where the numbers of children working fell by two-thirds. In Sub-Saharan Africa, however, the numbers increased by 1.3 million from 48 to 49.3 million. Overall, there was a slightly greater drop in the number of girls working than the number of boys, with 172 million boys working compared to 146 million girls.

8. Domestic workers

*“Instead of guaranteeing domestic workers’ ability to work with dignity and freedom from violence, governments have systematically denied them key labour protections extended to other workers. Migrants and children are especially at risk of abuse.”*  
Nisha Varia, senior researcher for the Women’s Rights Division of Human Rights Watch.<sup>38</sup>

More girls under 16 work in domestic service than in any other category of child labour, according to the ILO. For example, in Indonesia, there are nearly 700,000 child domestic workers and in El Salvador there are more than 20,000 between the ages of 14 and 19. Although it is difficult to find statistics on domestic workers, as they are not included in national workforce figures, it is estimated that around 90 per cent are girls.<sup>39</sup>

A recent report for Human Rights Watch<sup>40</sup> notes that: “Exploitative working conditions often make domestic labour one of the worst forms of child labour... In the worst situations, women and girls are trapped in situations of forced labour or have been trafficked into forced domestic work in conditions akin to slavery.”

Human Rights Watch notes that many child domestic workers find employment through brokers, who liaise with the family, but often make false promises about a better future for their daughters and at the same time demand a fee for finding the work, which is often far from home. In Morocco, brokers were found to receive a proportion of the girl’s salary to ensure that she keeps working. In some cases, the broker actually collects the salary and delivers it – or some of it – to her parents, who may not even know where she is.

In addition to long hours, often appalling conditions, and hard physical labour, the girls are separated from their parents, and sometimes locked into their employer’s house. Many are from rural areas working in cities far from home. Sometimes they are forbidden to visit or even telephone their families. Vina, who began working when she was 13, recalled, “I was always depressed because I could not leave the house to visit my mother or sister. No one came to visit me. It was not allowed.”<sup>41</sup> Apart from the psychological trauma, this also makes it difficult for them to seek help if they are in trouble.

These are some of the findings from surveys:

- A 2002-2003 baseline survey conducted by the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and the University of Indonesia estimated that there were 2.6 million domestic workers in

Indonesia, out of whom a minimum 688,132 (26 percent) were children; 93 percent of those were girls under the age of eighteen.<sup>42</sup>

- An ILO-IPEC study found that child domestics perform the same amount of work as adult workers, which tends to surpass their physical capacity and stamina.<sup>43</sup>
- In El Salvador, IPEC used data from the Salvadoran census bureau to conclude that approximately 21,500 youths between the ages of 14 and 19 work in domestic service. Some 20,800 – over 95 percent of these youths – are girls and women.<sup>44</sup>
- A 2004 study by the ILO, UNICEF and the World Bank in Morocco found that child domestic workers are “perhaps the most vulnerable group of urban child workers.”<sup>45</sup> A 2001 study by the Fafo Institute for Applied Social Science estimated that between 66,000 and 86,000 girls under fifteen were working as child domestic workers, and a 2001 government survey found 13,580 girls under fifteen working as domestics in the greater Casablanca area alone. Of the girls in the Casablanca survey, 870 were under eleven years old.<sup>46</sup>

**Domestic workers’ stories**  
*“If I did something the employer didn’t like, she would grab my hair and hit my head on the wall. She would say things like, ‘I don’t pay you to sit and watch TV! You don’t wash the dishes well. I pay your mother good money and you don’t do anything [to deserve it].’ ... Once I forgot clothes in the washer, and they started to smell, so she grabbed my head and tried to stick it in the washing machine.”*  
**Saida B**, child domestic worker, age 15, Casablanca, Morocco.

*“I work 13 hours each day as a domestic worker, beginning at 4.30am. It’s heavy work: washing, ironing, taking care of the child.” Flor receives about US\$26 each month for her labours. “In the morning I give milk to the baby. I make breakfast, iron, wash, sweep.” The only domestic*



worker for a household of four adults and a three-year-old, she is also responsible for preparing their lunch, dinner, and snacks, and she watches the child. “Sometimes I eat, but sometimes I am too busy.” When she finishes her workday, she heads to her fifth grade evening class. “Sometimes I come to school super tired.... I get up at 2am to go to work.” When she rises at 2am to return to work, she must walk one kilometre along a dangerous road to catch a minibus. “At 2am there are gangs where I live. This morning there was a group from a gang that tried to rob me of my chain. There is no rest for me. I can sit, but I have to be doing something. I have one day of rest each month.”

**Flor N**, San Salvador, aged 17<sup>47</sup>

“When the lady went to drop off the children to the grandmother’s house, the man would stay at home... he raped me many, many times; once a day, every day for three months. He hit me a lot because I didn’t want to have sex. I don’t know what a condom is, but he used some tissues after he raped me. [After paying off my three months’ debt] I took a knife, I said, ‘Don’t get near me, what are you doing?’ I told the lady; she was very angry with me and [the next day] she took me to the harbour and said she bought a ticket for me to Pontianak. I had no money to get home from Pontianak. I haven’t gone to a doctor.”

**Zakiah**, returned domestic worker from Malaysia, age 20, Lombok, Indonesia.<sup>48</sup>

## 9. Social protection

As poverty is often the reason why girls work and are kept out of school, increasing family incomes can help prevent child labour. So does social support when there is a crisis such as illness or the loss of the family home or livelihood.

**Social protection is defined as financial and social safety nets designed to protect**



Helping with the milking in Ecuador – all in a day’s work for girls in traditional societies.

poor and vulnerable people from extreme poverty and reduce their vulnerability to economic and social shocks. These can be cash benefits, abolishing school and hospital fees, or protecting the property of orphans in the aftermath of a parent’s death. Helping to establish legal frameworks that will deliver children’s rights is also a form of social protection.

In countries that have invested in such social support, in particular in Scandinavia, child poverty has been all but eliminated. This support includes a small payment, usually made to mothers, dependent on the number of children they have – a child benefit. It also includes free healthcare and education. In Latin America and in Asia, some of the most visible impacts of such social support have been to increase the number of girls who attend and remain in school (see Chapter 3 – *Education*) and improvements in the nutrition of girls. Mexico’s Oportunidades programme has had a greater impact on girls’ school enrolment than boys’. The Bangladesh cash-for-education programme has resulted in a 20-30 percent increase in primary school enrolment, with the children involved likely to stay in school up to two years longer than other children.<sup>49</sup>

## 10. Trafficking

### Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 35

- States Parties shall take national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of, or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form.

### Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

- Considering that, in order further to achieve the purposes of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the implementation of its provisions, especially articles 1, 11, 21, 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36, it would be appropriate to extend the measures that States Parties should undertake in order to guarantee the protection of the child from the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

“There was a woman who came to the market to buy charcoal. She found me and told my mother about a woman in Lomé who was looking for a girl like me to stay with her and do domestic work. She came to my mother and my mother gave me away. The woman gave my mother some money, but I don’t know how much.”

**Kéméyao A.**, child trafficking victim, age 10, Lomé, Togo<sup>50</sup>

Carole was 14 years old when she was trafficked to Bangui in the Central African Republic. Her mother said: “I gave my daughter to her father’s cousin so that she could have a better future. I was divorced and felt overwhelmed... She has come back to me as empty-handed as the day she left. I acknowledge that I have wronged my daughter: I never imagined her aunt would maltreat her.”<sup>51</sup>

Around 1.2 million children every year are victims of trafficking, both internationally and within national borders. Some 80 per cent of

those being trafficking globally are girls and women.<sup>52</sup> A significant proportion of those being trafficked annually from Eastern to Western Europe are children from poor families.

Girls who are trafficked often end up working in slave-like conditions as sex workers. Their passports are removed, and they are unable to leave. Their families have no idea where they are or what they are being forced to do, believing that they have left to find better opportunities elsewhere.

According to the US State Department, human trafficking generates an estimated 9.5 billion dollars annually with between 600,000 and 800,000 victims each year.<sup>53</sup> It is often linked to criminal activity, and as such remains hidden and is therefore difficult to tackle.

Traffickers keep young women under control by confiscating their identity documents, threatening to report them to the authorities, using violence or threats of violence against the girl or her family, keeping her locked up and isolated, depriving her of money or saying she owes a debt to the trafficker.

Some facts:

- UNICEF estimates that 1,000 to 1,500 Guatemalan babies and children are trafficked each year for adoption by couples in North America and Europe.
- Girls as young as 13 (mainly from Asia and Eastern Europe) are trafficked as ‘mail-order brides.’ In most cases these girls and women are powerless and isolated and at great risk of violence.
- Large numbers of children are being trafficked in West and Central Africa, mainly for domestic work but also for sexual exploitation and to work in shops or on farms. Nearly 90 per cent of these trafficked domestic workers are girls.
- Children from Togo, Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana are trafficked to Nigeria, Côte d’Ivoire, Cameroon and Gabon. Children are trafficked both in and out of Benin and Nigeria. Some children are sent as far away as the Middle East and Europe.<sup>54</sup>
- The International Organisation for Migration estimates that 1,000 girls between 14 and



24 are taken from Mozambique to work as sex workers in South Africa each year.<sup>55</sup>

- Other documented cases include reports of girls from Malawi being trafficked to the Netherlands and Italy to work in brothels run by Nigerian madams.
- Women and children are trafficked in Afghanistan, both internally and to Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia for forced labour and commercial sexual exploitation. Children may be sold into debt bondage in the brick kiln and carpet-making industries.<sup>56</sup>

### Coco's story

When she was growing up in Romania, Coco would help out at home every day while struggling to stay in school. Then, when she was nine, her father left the family. Her mother was disabled by mental illness, and the family had to support itself by begging. For a while, Coco's older sister worked to support them, but then decided that it was too difficult and left the family too. They never heard from her again. So when Coco was 18 and a friend offered to take her to Ireland for a job in a restaurant, she jumped at the chance.

"My friend's sister and a man waited at the airport," Coco says. "They imprisoned me in an apartment. My friend's sister was there all the time, and they forced me to work as a prostitute. I tried to escape many times, but I didn't succeed and I was beaten."

After two months, the police uncovered the trafficking ring and Coco was freed. Scared and isolated, Coco returned to Romania with the help of the International Organisation for Migration. She stayed for six months at one of the organisation's shelters, where she found people she could trust and who would help her move forward with her life. Coco decided to go back to school and graduated from high school in a year. She also studied computers and secretarial skills while working as a waitress at a

small restaurant. "Now I am in my first year at the university studying social work," notes Coco. "But I also work with ADPARE to assist in reintegrating other victims of trafficking."<sup>57</sup>

Because of the concern over human trafficking, and in particular its effect on women and girls, the UN adopted a Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and girls, to supplement the UN Convention on Transactional Organised Crime. The Council of Europe has also introduced legislation aimed at reducing trafficking in the region. The challenge, as usual, has been how to enforce laws that protect the victims of trafficking. Girls who have been trafficked need both psychological and social support to come to terms with what has happened to them and to build a new life.

## 10. Sexual exploitation

Trafficking is often linked to forced sexual activity. Globalisation and the use of the Internet to sell sexual services and pornography, and the rise of sex tourism, have made such exploitation harder to combat. Many of the girls being trafficked for sex are very young.

Surveys indicate that 30 to 35 per cent of all sex workers in the Mekong sub-region of Southeast Asia are between 12 and 17 years of age.

Mexico's social service agency reports that there are more than 16,000 children engaged in prostitution, with tourist destinations being among those areas with the highest number.

In Lithuania, 20 to 50 percent of sex workers are believed to be minors. Children as young as age 11 are known to work as sex workers. Children from children's homes, some 10 to 12 years old, have been used to make pornographic movies.<sup>58</sup>

Brazil's sex tourism industry exploits an estimated 500,000 girls under the age of 14. Thousands more serve as sex workers in remote mining camps under conditions of virtual slavery.

Guatemala City has also become a centre of international sex trafficking, with girls from all over Central America smuggled in and forced to work as sex workers.<sup>59</sup>

In Sri Lanka, the government estimated that there were more than 2,000 child sex workers in the country, but private groups claimed that the number was as high as 6,000.<sup>60</sup>

### RR's story

RR is 10 years old. On November 30, 2002, she was found by a merchant in one of the busiest parts of Ciudad del Este, Paraguay. She was very dirty, and dressed in trousers and a pullover and wearing Japanese-style slippers. She had about \$12 in her pockets, the results of her 'sexual activity'. It had been 48 hours since she returned to her mother's home. She was frightened to go back as she had not met the 'goal' her mother had established. She said she did not want to go home, as she was afraid her mother would beat her.

She was taken to the Children and Adolescents' courthouse, where she told the judge that she lived with her mother and seven siblings. Her brother Tito, aged 15, cleans car windscreens, her 14 year old sister had run away with a boyfriend; her brother Eduardo was 13 and a drug addict, and her other siblings were younger than her. She told how every morning she would leave her home and cross the Puente de la Amistad to the border city of Foz de Iguazu. Her pretext was that she was buying sweets to sell. She said she had an established 'cliente'.

RR went to stay with a neighbour. Her mother was taken into custody by the police. She was the first girl to benefit from the Centre for the Prevention and Integral Attention to Boys, Girls and Adolescents of Sexual Commercial Exploitation in Ciudad del Este, run by the diocese and supported by the ILO. Today she goes to school, and receives psychological attention and healthcare. She no longer lives with her mother.<sup>61</sup>

### Keerthi's story<sup>62</sup>

Keerthi, aged 13, lived in a poor family in rural Andhra Pradesh, India. Her mother and stepfather showed her little affection. Perhaps to compensate for the neglect, she started to fantasise about a glamorous life in the city, and she became obsessed with cosmetics.

Vijaya, a 'friend', arranged for her to meet a man named Pandu, for whom she was acting as an intermediary. Pandu's offer of a job as a domestic worker in the city was enough to persuade Keerthi to go with him. But when she was deposited in a brothel in Mumbai, she realised how cruelly she had been tricked.

After 10 days of being forced to work as a sex worker, Keerthi managed to run away. She boarded a train without a ticket and almost reached home before being discovered by a ticket inspector. A community worker found her crying, and calling out for help in a rural railway station. She took her to a transit home for rescued children in a nearby provincial town.

Meanwhile, a local organisation working in partnership with Plan in Keerthi's home district contacted her family and the head of her village. Negotiations were held about the type of help and support the child would need. Keerthi was also consulted. She suffered from severe trauma and she needed professional help from a child psychologist.

Eventually she was able to return to her family. As with other returned children, the local organisation will follow her progress for at least six months.<sup>63</sup>

## 11. What still needs to be done?

Women's work has always been of central productive importance and in many parts of the world is becoming of increasing economic relevance. This must not go hand in hand with

exploitation, particularly of young women and girls, who are the most vulnerable.

In many cases the work that girls and young women are forced into is both illegal and entirely unacceptable. Where it is not, many governments have signed up to international legislation which aims to protect children who have to work. International laws do not prohibit child labour *per se*, recognising that many children have to work in order to survive and learning how to work can help young people to enter the labour market when they are adults. Girls and young women have a right not to have to work at a young age or for long hours so that they are prevented from going to school. There is also international legislation on women and equal pay. One of the key issues is enforcement of legislation, for example, the enforcement of minimum age legislation in the absence of a birth certificate.

Attitudes towards girls' and young women's work are crucial. Social policies are needed to tackle discrimination in the workplace. Parents need to be convinced that it is more important for their daughters to go to school than to work. And the kind of discrimination that means an employer sees women's work as of less value than men's should be outlawed.

#### **So how can girls and young women be protected from exploitation and discrimination?**

- As we have seen in this report (Chapter 3 – *Education*), education can be the key to a girl's future, to that of her children and family as a whole. Programmes that enable working girls to continue to attend out of school classes are vital for them to fulfil their potential.
- Targeted benefits, such as child benefit, stipends and pensions can act as a protective measure against girls being 'pushed' into exploitative labour for the poorest and most vulnerable families.
- Reducing unpaid household work would free up girls' time for education. There are clear advantages to girls of providing basic water access, fuel efficient stoves and other home related technology,

as well as, in some parts of the world, diversification of agricultural production which is not gender-specific.

- Legislation against child domestic labour is understandably difficult to enforce as this is largely a hidden problem. The key is finding the balance between work and education, and enforcing the law when girls have been sexually or economically exploited or abused.
- Gender sensitive national programmes of action against trafficking are crucial to successfully tackling trafficking. Such a programme could include updating and enforcing legislation, providing appropriate protection, support and rehabilitation services for girls and mobilising relevant private sector industries, such as the travel industry.

## **12. Girls' voices**

*“One of the most critical problems here in the Philippines is child labour. It is a common problem, yet remains unsolved mainly due to the lack of knowledge about Child's Rights... We should get involved and give these children attention. We could start by educating friends and families on the rights of a child and that child labour is in violation of these rights. We could seek the assistance of concerned community officials to enforce laws that protect children against any kind of abuse or violence, but most of all we could show these children that we care. We should let these children know that every child has great value and that their role is not just to work for their families but to be what they dream to become.”*

**Analou**, 16, Philippines

*“Some relatives come from the cities to the village and take these girls to towns promising to help them learn a trade but end up introducing them into prostitution, forced labour and other illegal activities. This usually happens to girls who come from a poor family background... Female relatives*

*who are accomplices promised their parents that they will sponsor them in school or a trade, only to end up introducing the child into prostitution. Since the girls might not have the transport or means to return to the village they have no choice than to give in.”*

**Violet** aged 15 and **Martha** aged 16, Cameroon<sup>64</sup>

*“As a domestic worker, you have no control over your life. No one respects you. You have no rights. This is the lowest kind of work.”*

**Hasana**, child domestic worker who began employment at age 12, Indonesia.<sup>65</sup>

*“I am a girl and I will call myself a feminist because I truly believe that woman should be in the same level playing field as man. I believe in the 'role' thing – how men and women are different and equal. If our skills match up or exceed that of man, then our wages should reflect that.”*

**Zhu**, 17, China<sup>66</sup>

# Girls in exceptionally difficult circumstances

Nearly 50 per cent of sexual assaults worldwide are against girls aged 15 years or younger

6

## 1. Introduction

### Convention on the Rights of the Child

#### Article 2

1. States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parents' or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

We have seen that girls and young women continue to face discrimination in many areas of their lives. There are some, however, who have to counter a double or triple discrimination and who find themselves in especially difficult circumstances. Sometimes this is simply because they come from a poor family and may end up surviving on the street. Sometimes it is because they come from a group that is discriminated against such as indigenous groups, or those from a minority ethnic or racial background, or have

a different sexual orientation.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes it is because a young woman is disabled in some way. Or it can be due to circumstance – living in a conflict area, becoming a refugee or a displaced person, or being orphaned. In all these situations, girls and young women have a particularly difficult time.

## 2. Girls from minority and indigenous groups

Girls from indigenous groups or from a minority ethnic or racial background are particularly vulnerable to violence and abuse. They face discrimination because they belong to a particular group and also because they are female.

- There are some 300 million indigenous peoples in more than 70 countries, around half of whom live in Asia.<sup>2</sup>
- There are some 5,000 ethnic groups in the world and more than 200 countries have significant minority ethnic or religious groups.<sup>3</sup>
- Two-thirds of countries have more than one religious or ethnic group that accounts for at least 10 per cent of the population.<sup>4</sup>
- Almost 900 million people belong to groups



that experience disadvantage as a result of their identity, with 359 million facing restrictions on their religion.<sup>5</sup>

Dalit girls in India are one such group. Every day in India, a Dalit girl or woman is abused, raped or killed. In India, Nepal and other parts of Asia, Dalit girls and women – formerly known as ‘untouchables’ – are looked down upon by other castes who view their bodies as ‘available’, and are often also treated badly by Dalit men. Traditionally they do menial jobs that no-one else will do, such as scraping public latrines clean.

One five-year study in four Indian states found that 23 per cent of female Dalits interviewed had been raped, 43 per cent had experienced domestic violence, 47 per cent sexual harassment, 55 per cent physical assault and 62 per cent verbal abuse.<sup>6</sup> Of all the cases studied only 0.6 per cent ever made it to court, due to obstruction by the police (who often harbour caste prejudices themselves) or by the dominant castes. Many Dalits simply accept that no-one is going to help them and don’t even attempt to seek justice.

#### **Bangaru Sridevi – a Dalit girl fights back**

Bangaru Sridevi is one of the many girls from such groups who fought back against the stigma and potential violence that she was born into:

*“I was born into the safai karmachari (SK) community. My mother and grandmother used to clean shit in the public toilets. My mother had a hard life. She was married at the age of 14. My grandmother would not allow me to touch the broom. My mother was determined I would study. She saved money for me. Fought to get me a scholarship. Others told her: ‘Why make your girl study? However much she studies, she will be a sweeper.’ Once at home the broom fell down and I went to pick it up. My grandmother screamed: ‘Don’t touch that broom!’ She was obsessive about this. ‘Never touch a broom or you will be condemned to*

*sweep latrines forever. You must never be a sweeper. You must study.’*

*“School and college were bitter experiences. No matter how well we worked the upper caste teachers would always give us lower marks, even if we did better than the dominant caste students. Even the name of the students were divided on caste lines on the roll register.*

*“One experience stays with me forever. During the Vinayaka Chaturthi celebrations, an SK child fell into the water during the immersion ceremony. No one would jump in to save him because he was an SK. Touching him would pollute them. So the child drowned. I’ll never forget that.*

*“The best thing that happened to me was joining the Safai Karmachari Andolan in 2004. Every year we stop scavenging in different places. We identify dry latrines and take complaints to government officials. So far in Andhra Pradesh 1,000 people have stopped cleaning shit. Through the Scheduled Caste Corporation we have purchased small plots of land for rehabilitation. We are working with small scale industries too. There is a cashew nut processing project in the making.*

*“I am now the State Convenor of the Safai Karmachari Andolan, Andhra Pradesh. There are still 3,000 people engaged in cleaning shit in AP. Until every single person stops, our job will not be done.”<sup>7</sup>*

### **3 Girls with disabilities**

#### **Convention on the Rights of the Child**

Article 23

1. States Parties recognise that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions that ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child’s active participation in the community.

Disabled children face particular discrimination. A 2005 UNICEF report says children with disabilities in Eastern Europe often face a bleak existence.<sup>8</sup> The report says that the numbers of registered children with disabilities are increasing since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The total number of children with disabilities in the 27 countries considered in the report has tripled – from about 500,000 in 1990 to 1.5 million in 2000. An additional 1 million children with disabilities are thought to go unregistered. Many of these children are placed in institutions, away from their families, and face a life of stigma and discrimination. By 2002, 317,000 children with disabilities were living in residential institutions in the region. Many come from poor families.

“Although children with disabilities have become more visible since the beginning of transition and attitudes towards them and their families are changing, many of them remain simply ‘written off’ by society,” said Marta Santos Pais, Director of the Innocenti Research Centre (IRC). Yet, as called for by UNICEF, every child has the right to grow up in a family environment and in conditions that ensure respect for their dignity, promote self-reliance and active participation in social life. However a girl living with a disability is likely to be subject to several layers of discrimination.

“Giving parents and communities the power to make their own decisions is, in itself, a valuable contribution to consolidate democracy in this region,” said Maria Calivis, Regional Director for UNICEF CEE/CIS region. “It means giving a voice to those most directly affected, backed by the necessary decentralized, local resources.” (See Chapter 3 – Education).

The report notes that some progress has been made in protecting the rights of children with disabilities. Previously negative attitudes are changing slowly and legislation is in place in many countries to try and help children to integrate into society. But, according to UNICEF, there is still a long way to go. The fact the basic data on children with disabilities is not disaggregated by gender does not help.

#### **Living with disability<sup>9</sup>**

*“I spent the first two weeks of my life in a neonatal intensive care unit in Bremerhaven, Germany, on a United States military base. Shortly after I took my first breath, a young captain told my father that I had a condition that would cause most people around the world to take me to the top of a mountain and leave me there.*

*“The condition is a rare congenital bone disease called osteogenesis imperfecta... It causes brittle bones resulting in fractures and, in its most extreme form, death. I have a moderate type of osteogenesis imperfecta and have only had 55 fractures. I have undergone 12 surgeries to strengthen my legs through the insertion of metal rods into my bone marrow, as well as one attempt to prevent further curvature of my spine by fusing bone into the curves.*

*“In addition to the physical pain of operations and fractures, I have been plagued with feelings of shame and self-contempt as a result of the social stigma of disability. This is an issue I continue to grapple with today as a 24-year-old law student... Nowhere did I find positive images expressing the humanity of disabled people – only those in which we were depicted as objects intended to provoke pity or sympathy...*

*“Through these experiences, I came to understand how the stigma related to disability leads to social and economic oppression all over the world.”*

Bethany Stevens is a law student at the University of Florida (UF) and has been a disability activist for five years. She directed a campaign and petition process that resulted in the opening of a testing centre for students with disabilities at UF. She is the president of the Union of Students with Disabilities, founder of Delta Sigma Omicron and recently directed the Building a DisAbility Movement conference hosted at UF.

## 4. Lesbian girls

It is impossible to estimate how many lesbian or bisexual or transgender girls there might be in the world today. The main reason for this is ‘invisibility’. Lesbians tend to be ‘doubly invisible’ and doubly discriminated against due to a combination of patriarchy and heterosexism. A person’s sexual orientation or even their profound gender identification is not always obvious. Heterosexuality and gender conformity are usually automatically assumed.

There are good reasons why many adults who do not conform to gender and sexuality norms keep quiet about their difference. Homosexuality remains illegal in some 85 countries and it is punishable by death in 10.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout Europe homosexuality is now technically legal. But a recent report shows that young lesbians, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people across the continent still face considerable discrimination and exclusion in their everyday life.<sup>11</sup> They experience estrangement from family, bullying and marginalisation at school, which can lead to such problems as under-achievement and school dropout, low self-esteem and mental ill-health.

These in turn have a negative impact on their capacity to manage the transition from school to work and to become confident and independent adults. (See Chapter 2 – *Family Life* and Chapter 3 – *Education*)

Some communities – especially with strong religious objections to homosexuality or a deep macho culture – can be very hostile places for lesbian girls. In India, two girls, convicted by a trial of village elders for committing ‘immoral activities’ with each other, were lynched by villagers in Assam’s Kokrajhar District.<sup>12</sup>

In Medellín, Colombia, at the end of 2002, a 14-year-old girl was undressed in the street and a sign was attached to her saying ‘I’m a lesbian’. According to residents from the area, she was raped by three armed men, believed to be paramilitaries. A few days later she was found dead with her breasts cut off.<sup>13</sup>

Research into the situation of lesbian girls is in its early days and much work still needs to be done. Because of the risks involved for the individuals concerned, research has to be based on those lesbians who feel confident, or safe enough, to come forward, either to take part in surveys or increasingly, to contribute to websites and chat rooms for young lesbians.

## 5. Facing violence

### Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 39

• States Parties shall take all appropriate action to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation or abuse, torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading punishments; or armed conflicts.

*“No violence against children is justifiable; all violence against children is preventable. There should be no more excuses... None of us can look children in the eye if we continue to approve or condone any form of violence against them.”*  
The UN Study on Violence Against Children

Children have a right not to be hurt, abused or tortured. But this right is violated on a daily basis for millions of young people around the world. As we have seen, girls and young women are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, both in the home (see Chapter two – *Family Life*) and in times of conflict or insecurity. Nearly 50 per cent of all sexual assaults worldwide are against girls 15 years or younger.<sup>14</sup>

Increasingly, young women are standing up against violence and asking to be consulted about their protection. Those in power need to listen to their voices and respond with action.

### Changing lives with Xchange<sup>15</sup>

Marleni Cuellar, 20, has dedicated herself to building a new youth movement called ‘Xchange’ which is launching in Belize and the rest of the Caribbean region over the next few months. Xchange is all

about building harmony and commitment against violence one person at a time, through musical events, dramas and other participatory methods.

“What we’re trying to do is create a culture of non-violence in the Caribbean, because it is becoming acceptable to use violence as a way of dealing with difficulties,” she says.

Marleni is especially concerned about gun violence and violence associated with street crime, which is on the rise in Belize. “Recently it’s been a lot of 15, 16, and 17 year olds getting killed with guns, which wakes up anybody to think, ‘Hey, this is getting out of hand,’” she says.

Marleni is also concerned about violence in the home, which she says is rife in Belize, especially sexual and physical abuse and corporal punishment. She says that corporal punishment “is almost culturally ingrained. We have grown up with that form of discipline. We have to be able to recognise that corporal punishment is a form of violence.”

She points out that Belize was the fifth country to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which prohibits all types of violence against children, and says that this is evidence of the nation’s commitment to child protection. Marleni believes that the government should now fulfil this commitment through legal measures such as making corporal punishment illegal.

She also believes that cultural attitudes must change, and that this only happens through mass movements. This is one reason why she is so excited about Xchange: Marleni is convinced that the movement has the potential to effect change on a wide scale.

“We have to be able to spread the message, spread the word and get other young people involved as much as possible. And through that we can start the creation of a new culture that doesn’t accept violence so easily.”



Children in over 60 countries have been calling for an end to violence against children, including trafficking.

### Children demand an end to violence against children<sup>16</sup>

Thousands of children in countries across six continents came together to demand their governments put an end to violence against children. Save the Children’s Day of Action saw children in over 60 countries staging events to protest against all forms of violence suffered by children, including physical and humiliating punishment, sexual abuse and exploitation, early marriage, neglect and torture.

Children are calling on their governments to:

- Ban all forms of violence against children in all settings, including the home
- Create an effective national child protection system
- Support the appointment of a Special Representative at the UN to drive forward the global project to end violence against children
- Prevent children from coming into conflict with the law, and protect them if they do with child-friendly justice systems
- Mobilise men and boys in the fight to end gender discrimination and violence against children.

6. Girls in times of conflict

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 38

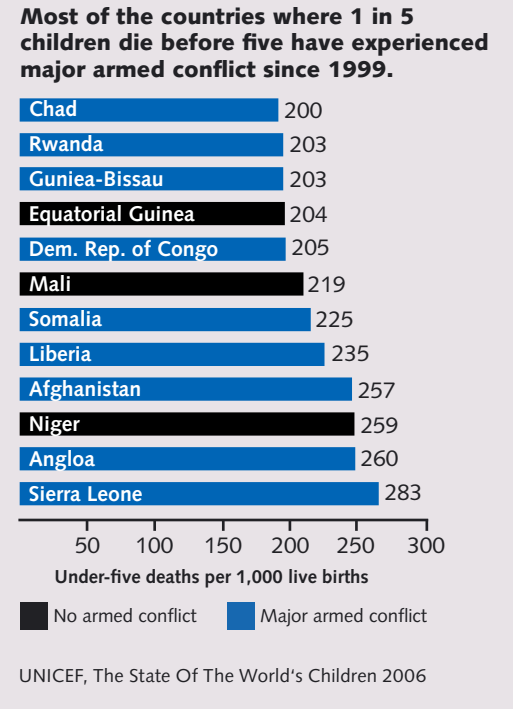
- States Parties undertake to respect and ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts which are relevant to the child.
- In accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect the civilian population in armed conflicts, States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict.

Conflict is a major factor in keeping a country poor – of the 34 poor countries that are furthest from reaching the Millennium Development Goals, 22 were in or emerging from war. Such conflicts are increasingly taking place within as well as between countries.

Young people between 10 and 25 comprise around 30 per cent of those affected by conflict and are more likely than other age groups to be directly caught up in violence.<sup>17</sup> UNICEF state that over the past decade, more than 2 million children have died as a result of conflict and at least 6 million have been permanently disabled or seriously injured.<sup>18</sup> As is so often the case, no-one knows what proportion are girls and what proportion are boys. Most of the countries where one in five children die before the age of five have experienced major conflict.

Boys (and sometimes girls) may be recruited to fight at a young age; girls are at risk of rape and sexual violence. They may miss out on years of education and face the psychological trauma of having lost family, friends and home. And returning home may not be the welcome with open arms that they had hoped for, as Milly Auma's story shows.

**Milly's escape<sup>19</sup>**  
In Uganda, over a 20-year period of conflict, the Lord's Resistance Army has abducted an estimated 25,000 children,



including some 7,500 girls. Many were forced into relationships and conceived children. Milly Auma was taken from her community by the Lord's Resistance Army when she was still in primary school. It was 10 years before she was able to escape – and by that time she had two children of her own. But instead of being welcomed when she returned home to Gulu, many in her village rejected her.

“People said I had joined the LRA willingly,” says Milly, now 26. “They would say, ‘Why do you taint us with your evil spirit?’”

Many other children who were abducted report similar stigma and discrimination on returning to their communities. Life became so difficult for Milly that she even considered going back to the LRA if she couldn't find acceptance for herself and her children, then aged two and four.

In the end, it was the determination that had helped her survive captivity that

enabled Milly to adapt to her new adult life. She was helped by the Youth Social Work Association (YSA), a community-based organisation supported by UNICEF and its partners. The YSA works to reintegrate formerly abducted children and other vulnerable adolescents into mainstream society.

In 2005, using her new skills, Milly started a business transporting freshwater fish from the Nile River in Jinja and selling them in the local markets of Gulu. She made an initial profit of approximately \$50, and a second trip doubled her income. Now she is planning to lease a plot of land to grow vegetables for sale.

“I now have a business and people see me as being successful,” says Milly, who is also training as a counsellor for vulnerable adolescents. “I should not be portrayed as being useless. If anyone says something negative about me, I now ignore it.”

**Rape as a weapon of war**

Over the last decade or more, rape has increasingly been used as a weapon of war. According to the UN this has been “the least condemned war crime.”

- In Bosnia in 1992 – 1995, rape was used against thousands of girls and women.
- In Rwanda, it is estimated that half a million girls and women were raped during the genocide and that 67 per cent were subsequently infected with HIV, triggering the country's HIV/AIDS epidemic.
- In Sierra Leone, young girls in particular were singled out for rape. Many did not survive. An estimated 70 to 90 per cent of rape victims contracted HIV.
- In Colombia, rape is used by guerillas and paramilitary forces as well as soldiers in government armed forces. The rate of rape of adolescent girls is estimated at 2.5 per 1,000 although only an estimated 17 per cent of sexual violence is reported. Some girls who are raped are as young as five years old.<sup>20</sup>

In Darfur, in Sudan, many thousands of girls and women have been raped. Many are the victims of multiple rapes. The UN says that around 40 per cent of the victims are under 18 years of age.<sup>21</sup>

Like the teenager below, those who have been raped may face the added persecution of being rejected by their families and possibly of becoming pregnant by the rapists.

**The social consequences of rape in Darfur**

*“I am 16 years old. One day, in March 2004, I was collecting firewood for my family when three armed men on camels came and surrounded me. They held me down and tied my hands and raped me one after the other. When I arrived home, I told my family what happened. They threw me out of the home and I had to build my own hut away from them. I was engaged to a man and I was so much looking forward to getting married. After I got raped, he did not want to marry me and broke off the engagement because he said I was now disgraced and spoilt. It is the worst thing for me...”*

*“When I was eight months' pregnant from the rape, the police came to my hut and forced me with their guns to go to the police station. They asked me questions so I told them I had been raped. They told me that as I was not married I would deliver the baby illegally. They beat me with a whip on the chest and back and put me in jail. There were other women in jail who had the same story. During the day, we had to walk to the well four times a day to get the policemen water, clean and cook for them. At night I was in one small cell with 23 other women. I had no other food than what I could find during my work during the day. And the only water was what I drank at the well. I stayed 10 days in the jail and now I have to pay the fine, 20,000 Sudanese dinars (\$65) they asked me. My child is now two months' old.”<sup>22</sup>*



## Building peace

*“During the transition to peace, a unique window of opportunity exists to put in place a gender-responsive framework for a country’s reconstruction. The involvement of women in peacebuilding and reconstruction is in fact a key part of the process of inclusion and democracy that can contribute to a lasting peace”*

Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director, UNIFEM<sup>23</sup>

There are many laws, both national and international, to protect girls and women in times of conflict. For example, UN Security Council Resolution 1325, passed unanimously in October 2000, calls upon all parties to protect women in armed conflict and to integrate gender perspectives into peacekeeping operations, UN reporting systems and peacebuilding programmes.<sup>24</sup> But when situations are violent and unstable it is almost impossible to enforce. As the previous examples in this chapter indicate, state endorsed violence against young women may well violate the international laws in place. Unless the laws are enforced, girls will continue to suffer.

## 7. Refugees and displaced people

### Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 22

1. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the said States are Parties.

In 2005, there were approximately 12.7 million refugees in the world, approximately half of



LORNA ROACH

whom were women. At the end of 2004, roughly 48 per cent of all refugees worldwide were children<sup>25</sup> and 25 million people were displaced within their own countries by conflict or human rights violations.<sup>26</sup> They have not only lost their homes and very often family and friends, but young women in particular are at further risk of abduction, trafficking and sexual violence.

In Colombia, studies have found that two out of three displaced young women became pregnant by the age of 19 and that there had been a “marked increase in teenage pregnancies and unsafe abortions” due to violence and displacement.<sup>27</sup>

Women refugees are usually responsible for looking after the sick, or wounded, or dying or displaced, often on their own as husbands and partners and older sons are fighting. Girls can find themselves in this situation if their parents are killed or separated from them.

## 8. When disasters strike...

*“In these days I realised that youngsters want to participate and make a better world. All [their] ideas show that young people are united and willing to help the people that need their support. The youngsters are acting locally and that’s great because they show their urge to live in a better world.”*

Catalina, aged 18, Colombia<sup>28</sup>

*A makeshift school for girls displaced by earthquake in Pakistan.*

Disasters hit the poorest worst. According to UNDP, 85 per cent of the people exposed to earthquakes, tropical cyclones, floods and droughts live in countries having either medium or low human development.<sup>29</sup> More than 95 per cent of all deaths caused by disasters occur in developing countries. And women and girls are the most vulnerable when a disaster strikes. It is estimated that after the tsunami in 2004, four times more women died than men.<sup>30</sup>

There are many reasons for this. Girls and women are likely to hear about an impending disaster later than men and boys. Often based in the home, their access to public spaces and to radios, television and telephones may be controlled by the men in the household. Men may also make the decisions about when to evacuate the household and women may not be used to going out without a male relative to accompany them.

Girls are often the ones looking after their younger siblings as well as trying to protect themselves. In Sri Lanka, after the tsunami in 2004, women sometimes died because they were searching for their children.<sup>31</sup> They are often less likely to know how to swim, climb or have the physical know-how to escape in times of danger. Again, after the tsunami, women’s clothes prevented them escaping and most did not know how to swim.

After a disaster, food distribution is normally targeted at the male head of the household. Women are often the last to be given shelters and other forms of relief. Emergency provision often ignores women’s needs for items such as sanitary towels, and the need for private space for personal hygiene, or space away from men, or provision for women who are pregnant or breast feeding.

Girls are vulnerable to sexual abuse in times of disaster, and may even resort to selling their bodies for food. They are also the ones left looking after the rest of the family. For this reason, after a disaster, they are less likely to go back to school.

Because disaster plans do not look specifically at girls’ and women’s needs, they also ignore the skills and experience that they bring, in terms

of social networks as well as practical skills that are needed after a disaster strikes. As a result, they fail to include girls and women in decision-making processes. Women’s groups advocated for the right of women to take part in decision-making and this may have been one of the factors that pushed the Sri Lankan government to approve a proposal for gender equality in future relief and rehabilitation.<sup>32</sup>

### Zimbabwe

Jessica Pedzura, 17, lives in Mutorashanga, a Zimbabwean community affected by food shortages in 2003. Save the Children (SCF) was one of the organisations distributing food aid. In an evaluation of their work, they found that many people, including children, felt they had not been adequately informed about the food distribution process. Children complained that distribution points were too far away, the loads were too heavy and distributions took place during school hours.

In September 2003, SCF set up children’s feedback committees to channel complaints. Children were chosen to lead information collection and dissemination because they were principal beneficiaries and they could identify issues that adults were unwilling or unable to see.

Over eight months, 70 children collected invaluable feedback from their peers. Foster children said their guardians denied them rations or forced them to work long hours for a share of the aid. They complained of guardians selling off food to buy beer. The committees called for vigorous promotion of children’s rights within the community. According to Jessica, “Our community now knows a lot more about abuse and I believe awareness is now higher about the rights of children. I have not heard of ill treatment of foster children in Mutorashanga since the child feedback committees were established.”<sup>33</sup>

## 9. Girls on the streets

***“I had my first child at 14, and I gave birth on the streets.”***

**Nana Pierre**, 18, from Port au Prince, Haiti.<sup>34</sup>

### Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 20

- 1. Provides for “A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or in whose own best interests cannot be allowed to remain in that environment, shall be entitled to special protection and assistance provided by the State.”

There are many reasons why children leave home. Some may have lost parents, but by no means are they all orphans. Girls on the streets tend to be older, and for this reason they often start life on the streets having “experienced serious family problems, with more frequent histories of sexual and physical abuse before leaving the household. Drug addiction, prostitution, and the street is the last resort for these girls.” Girls are more likely to continue to endure abuse at home because they know how dangerous the street is for them, but they are also less likely to return once they have taken the decision to leave.<sup>35</sup> For sexually transgressive girls eviction from home may have nothing to do with choice but the means by which a family may rid itself of a source of shame. (See Chapter 2 – *Family Life*). Many girls on the street are forced to turn to prostitution, with a high risk of HIV as a result. (See Chapter 4 – *Health*).

Street children are often the visible face of poverty, and as such are abused by the public and sometimes the police. In Bolivia, they are called ‘urchins, little bugs, little criminals, fruit birds, dirty faces, vermin, mosquitoes, or little farts’. Such stigmatisation can have fatal consequences. In 1997 in Brazil, a group of 50 street children were fired on by police. Five were killed, and a poll a few days later found that the “majority of the public approved of the actions”.<sup>36</sup> In Bogotá,

Colombia, street children are murdered by vigilantes, merchants and police in a practice commonly known as ‘social cleansing’.<sup>37</sup>

It is impossible to quantify the numbers of street children, but they are likely to run to tens of millions. They may be visible to the public, but they are the hardest to reach with services such as education and health. In Latin America and Africa, 75-90 per cent of street children are boys. There has been little research on the reasons for this, but one study in Brazil found that girls were more likely to be involved in work in the home and because they were able to help in this way were “more often welcomed in their relatives’ households when families disintegrated”. Although they are among the most vulnerable, girls on the street are also the hardest to protect.<sup>38</sup>

“These children are deprived of affection and protection. They do not have access to food and education, and are constantly under the threat of all kinds of violence, including sexual abuse and exploitation,” said Sylvana Nzirorera, UNICEF Communication Officer for Haiti. There are many thousands of children on the streets of the capital, Port au Prince.<sup>39</sup>

### The Lakou Centre<sup>40</sup>

**The Lakou Centre is headed by Father Attilio Stra, an Italian native who has been working with Haiti’s children for 30 years. Every day about two hundred children and young people pass through the large courtyard of the centre (‘Lakou’ means ‘courtyard’ in Creole).**

**“Almost all the children who come to the centre are traumatised by bad experiences. They were treated badly,” said Father Attilio. “You can hardly find a child who doesn’t have a scar on his body. We invite them to the centre and teach them vocational skills to prepare them for a better future.” The children can learn a range of skills including mechanics, metal work, hairdressing and tailoring. The centre also runs a nursery for the children of street children who became mothers at a very early age.**



*Life on the streets in Togo.*

**“I have three children, the first was born when I was 16. This is my son, and he is four years old. I gave birth to them on the street,” said Marienette Azor, 20.**

**Young women like Marienette are the most vulnerable. Poor living conditions and the dangerous nature of a street life have made them easy targets for sexual exploitation and HIV/AIDS.**

**Although the Lakou centre has been a safe haven for many homeless boys, girls and babies, it can only shelter them for so long. Each day, after of a few hours of peace and comfort, the need to make a living will once again drive the children back onto the streets.**

The Lakou Centre fulfils one of the crucial needs for street children – providing them with a safe environment and equipping them with the skills to help them re-integrate into society. Such safe environments are rare but crucial in preventing

violence against street children.

But the root causes which drive girls and boys onto the street, such as poverty and family violence and breakdown, also need to be addressed. And governments and NGOs need not only to find resources to train and support street children but also organise training workshops for all those involved – police, social workers and psychologists. Only then will girls and boys like those in the Lakou Centre have the future they deserve.

## 10. Girls in conflict with the law

### Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 40

1. States Parties recognise the right of every child alleged as, accused of, or recognised as having infringed the penal law to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child’s sense of dignity and worth, which reinforces the child’s respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of others and which takes into account the child’s age and the desirability of promoting the child’s reintegration and the child’s assuming a constructive role in society.

There is little data on children in detention, and even less on girls, but estimates are that more than a million children are living in detention as a result of being in conflict with the law. Often they are treated as adults and many suffer violent abuse. This includes physical and sexual violence by adult detainees, guards, police or other juvenile inmates. They may be put in inappropriate or unsanitary conditions.

While more boys are detained than girls, girls in detention face particular problems that are often not recognised. They may be detained simply because they are victims, rather than perpetrators, of violence. A United Nations report notes that this includes: girls fleeing forced marriages, trafficked children and children in the commercial sexual exploitation industry as well as girls being put in so-called

‘protective custody’ to escape ‘honour crimes’. It also pointed out that children deemed ‘beyond parental control’ or girls who get pregnant out of wedlock may also be handed over by their parents to the juvenile justice system.<sup>41</sup>

Children in prison are likely to be vulnerable and living in challenging circumstances. One study for Britain’s Prison Reform Trust noted that: “Many children in prison have a background of severe social exclusion. Of those in custody of school age, over a quarter have literacy and numeracy levels of an average seven-year old. Over half of those under 18 in custody have a history of being in care or social services involvement and studies have found that 45 per cent have been permanently excluded from school.”<sup>42</sup>

It also noted that: “Behavioural and mental health problems are particularly prevalent amongst children in prison. Of prisoners aged 16-20, around 85 per cent show signs of a personality disorder and 10 per cent exhibit signs of psychotic illness, for example schizophrenia”.<sup>43</sup> In addition, drugs and alcohol are a major problem. “Of prisoners aged 16-20, over half reported dependence on a drug in the year prior to imprisonment. Over half the female and two-thirds of the male prisoners had a hazardous drinking habit prior to entering custody.”<sup>44</sup>

Because the prison populations of women are much smaller than those of men, girls are more likely to be detained with adult prisoners and therefore to be denied their right to protection, deprived of the specialist care they need, and possibly subject to abuse. Treatment of young people in prison, even in the North, can be inhumane, as one UK report points out: “Many young prisoners spend up to 20 hours locked in shared cells designed only for one person, forcing them to use the toilet in front of their cellmate and eat their meals in the same cramped, unhygienic conditions. Over-crowding in prisons is leading to the frequent movement of young people from one jail to another, sometimes over great distances. This causes distress and instability as well as disruption to educational and training courses vital for young people’s rehabilitation.”<sup>45</sup>

#### Nkeiruka’s story<sup>46</sup>

Nkeiruka became pregnant while unmarried, which is considered a taboo among the Igbo community in Nigeria to which she belongs. In December 1999, the then 15-year-old Nkeiruka gave birth unassisted at home, and her child died as a result of complications. Her uncle accused her of killing her newborn, and Nkeiruka and her mother Monica were arrested and taken to prison in Anambra state.

Now 21, Nkeiruka faces an uncertain future: deprived of a formal education while in prison and possessing few skills, she is uncertain of the reception she and her mother will receive from the community and family when they return home. A proper investigation was never conducted, no evidence of the alleged crime was found and the original case file disappeared.

Nkeiruka and her mother slept in a cell with up to 37 women for around 1,971 days. “Much like the many other children and young people who are incarcerated in Nigeria, they were forgotten,” says Nkolika Ebiede of the International Federation of Women Lawyers in Anambra, who helped secure their release.

Nkeiruka was one of over 6,000 children and teenagers in Nigeria who are in prison or juvenile detention centres. About 70 per cent of them are first-time offenders... Many of these children come from broken homes and large poor families, or are orphans. Young people, especially girls, are also victims of criminal acts such as domestic violence, rape, sexual exploitation and trafficking.

Juveniles in prison are often cut off from family and friends. Stigmatisation and rejection by society further affect the reintegration of victims. During her five and a half year incarceration, Nkeiruka received only one visitor, a sibling, in the

week before her scheduled release date.

The UN recommends that detention of children should only be used as a last resort.

## 11. What still needs to be done?

The gender discrimination faced by girls, as outlined in the previous chapters of this report, means that they are particularly vulnerable to a series of risks to their development and well-being, and are less likely to attain their rights. These risks increase at times of uncertainty and insecurity, or when girls face several layers of discrimination because they have a disability for example. This can mean that girls descend into or remain within an intergenerational cycle of poverty and violence.

Girls’ vulnerabilities as well as their capabilities need to be recognised. **So how can girls and young women in particularly difficult circumstances be protected and how can these situations be prevented?**

- The right of girls and young women, particularly those who are in exceptionally difficult circumstances, to protection from violence and abuse must be respected through the promotion of non-violent values in school and through girl-friendly reporting systems and support services.
- Where girls and young women have to be detained, gender-appropriate treatment is necessary and particular attention paid to children’s right to be detained separately from adults for their protection.
- Rape continues to go unpunished in many countries leading to the impunity of rapists and the stigmatisation of their victims. There are several successful models of medical, psychological and physical support that can help girls and young women to live with what has happened to them and develop their full potential as adult women.
- In times of conflict or disaster, provision must be made specifically for girls and

young women to ensure their protection, particularly as their safety is often at risk. Girls have the right to express their views and have them given due weight in the design, planning and implementation of policies and programmes. Young women need to be involved in post-conflict and post-disaster planning.

- The layers of discrimination faced by particular groups of girls will only be changed by a combination of supportive and protective legislation and the promotion of attitudinal change.

## 12. Girls’ voices

*“Children do not start wars. Yet they are most vulnerable to its deadly effects. Millions of innocent children die in conflicts, which is of no fault of theirs – just because some greedy leaders rob powers with the barrel of the gun. During such times everything freezes, no education, no potable drinking water, no electricity, food shortages, no shelter, and most of all some girls are raped leading to HIV/ AIDS.”*

Girl, 17, Ghana<sup>47</sup>

*“Violence against children, especially girls, has crossed all limits... People feel that a girl is meant to be used – either as a doormat, a maid, a birth-giving machine or as a source of physical pleasure. Something CONCRETE seriously needs to be done to change the current scenario because now a girl does not feel safe even in her own house, let alone the streets.”*

Girl, 16, India <sup>48</sup>

*“It is not only the government and NGOs who can take care of us but we ourselves must find ways to protect our rights. Let us all be aware of the problems we are facing now. Girls, don’t let other people abuse you. Stand up! and fight for your right!”*

Stephanie Marie, 13, Children’s Association in San Francisco, Camotes Islands, the Philippines<sup>49</sup>





# Conclusion



*In their extreme old age a childless couple was granted a daughter. This made them very happy and they prayed to the gods every morning and evening to bless their child. The prayer was granted. As their daughter grew up it soon became obvious that she was a remarkable child. She could run further and faster than anyone in the village, her manners were good, she sang rather well, and she excelled in her studies. There was only one thing wrong, which spoilt everything. This was not a defect. The gods hadn't cheated. She was indeed blessed with great ability. But everyone in the village was critical of her. "To be so damned good," they said, "is not womanly."*  
Suniti Namjoshi *The Gods*

***"Exploitation is focused more on girls than boys because we are seen in some countries as not having much value or status compared to them. In fact we have AS MUCH status and should be treated right."***  
Girl, 18, Australia<sup>1</sup>

This is the first time that a global report series on girls and young women has been published. 'Because I am a Girl' shows clearly how discrimination against girls and young women remains deeply entrenched and widely tolerated throughout the world. The struggle for women's rights has made little impact on girls who continue to be undervalued in society and within their families. Society's power structures allow this gender discrimination to continue. Wherever they live in the world, girls have to make choices – sometimes forced, sometimes of their own free will – which further disadvantage them. Or they lack the power to make the choices in their lives that will empower them; choices that their brothers are able to make

about where to live, whether to marry, who to marry, about work, children and family life.

As a result, girls are disadvantaged in comparison to boys. They are more vulnerable particularly in times of conflict, disaster and when they and their families are poor. Even today, with all the technologies and tools for development at our disposal, girls are still less likely to go to school than boys, and are more likely to be illiterate and innumerate when they grow up. In many families, they are considered of less value than their brothers. Girls are often married too young, work longer hours for less pay, and are more likely to be poor than their brothers. They are often subject to violence and abuse throughout their lives. In richer countries, while they feel themselves to be equal to boys and even do better at school, when they grow up their earnings are still less than their brothers' and they are still under pressure to aspire to standards of passive beauty and behaviour.

All this, despite numerous advances. The most remarkable have been in education. Recent figures show that girls are gaining access to education and literacy at a faster rate than boys, though the rate for boys and young men is still higher than that for girls and young women. In 1990, globally, literacy for young men between 15 and 24 was 88.2 per cent while for young women it was 80.1 per cent. By the period 2000-2004, this had increased to 90.4 per cent for young men and 84 per cent for young women.<sup>2</sup>

The trend is most evident in Africa, where the increase for young women in the same period has been from 55.0 per cent literacy to 78.4 and in Southern Asia, where it has increased from 51.0 to 63.3. The gap between girls' and boys' enrolments has also narrowed, though at secondary and tertiary levels there

are still far more boys than girls.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, significant progress has been made in many areas of health: women's life expectancy has risen at a rate 20 per cent higher than that of men during the past 20 years; the average fertility rate has fallen by a third.

Since the 1980s the numbers of women in the paid work force have grown faster than the numbers of men in every region of the world except Africa. In Latin America the growth rate for women has been three times that of men, while in the European Union 80 per cent of all growth in the labour force has been attributed to women's participation.

Despite these improvements, inequality between girls and boys remains deep-rooted and starts early. One adolescent girl from Pakistan said: "It's very painful, in everything from eating to education boys are given more importance. We are never allowed to go to the market. They would rather send a small boy alone instead of sending four females."<sup>4</sup>

Even in the field of education, in 2005, 94 countries failed to meet the first Millennium Development Target of having equal numbers of girls and boys in primary and secondary education. Forty-four million girls did not attend school.<sup>5</sup> Discrimination affects a girl throughout her life cycle – and beyond, to her children and grandchildren.

And yet research is also clear that when girls reach their full potential, through improved status, better health care, and education, it is the most effective development tool for society as a whole. As a country's primary enrolment rate for girls increases, so too does its gross domestic product per capita.<sup>6</sup> Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General, was at pains to emphasize this point in a number of his speeches: "Study after study has taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls and the empowerment of women."<sup>7</sup>

In addition, there is increasing recognition that investing in the 1.3 billion young women and men between the ages of 12 and 24 who live in the developing world, can bear important dividends for the future. In its 2007 *World*

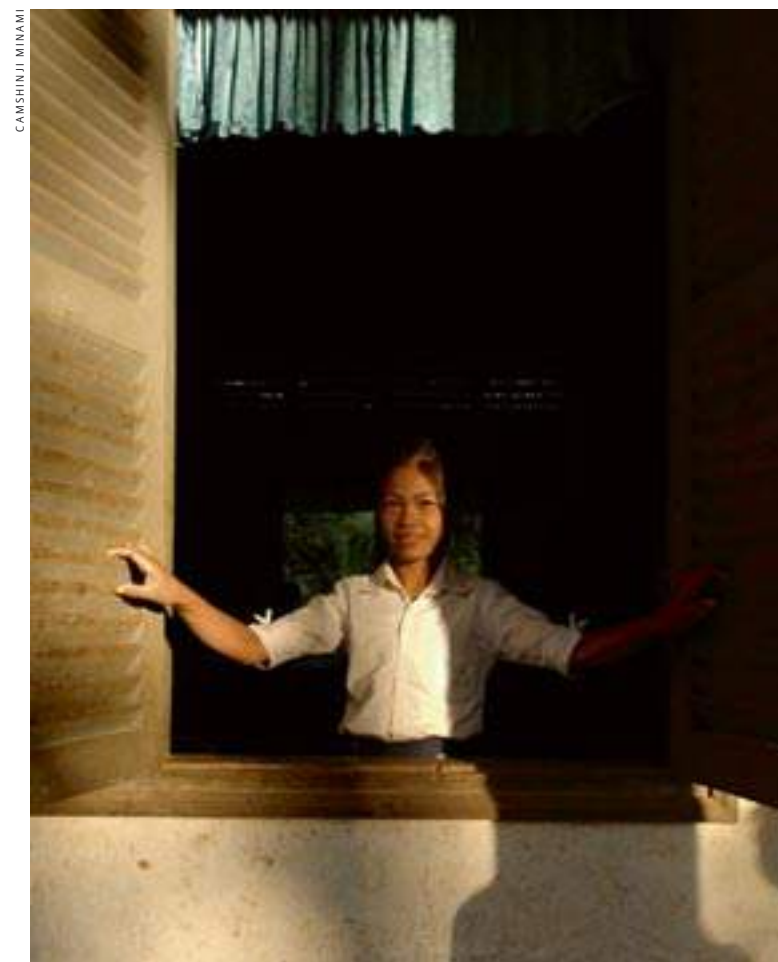
*Development Report*, the World Bank notes that: "Developing countries which invest in better education, healthcare, and job training for their record numbers of young people between the ages of 12 and 24, could produce surging economic growth and sharply reduced poverty."

### The importance of education for girls

Girls' education in particular is linked to improved health for themselves and their children, reduced fertility, better opportunities for earning an income, and prevention against HIV/AIDS. One World Bank study concluded: "Promoting gender equity in education and employment may be one of those few policies that have been termed 'win-win' strategies".<sup>8</sup> A UNICEF report noted: "It is impossible to overstate the links between health and education, especially women's education."<sup>9</sup>

### The link between girls' education and development

- **Increasing the share of women with secondary education by one percentage point boosts annual per capita income growth by 0.3 percentage points on average, according to a 100-country study by the World Bank.**<sup>10</sup>
- **Other World Bank studies have concluded that an extra year of education beyond the average boosts girls' eventual wages by 10–20 percent.**<sup>11</sup>
- **Data show a striking correlation between the under-five mortality rate and the educational level attained by a child's mother. In selected countries, under-five mortality is highest among children whose mothers had no education, lower if the mother has had some primary schooling, and still lower where she has benefited from some secondary education.**<sup>12</sup>
- **A recent 63-country study by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) found that more productive farming due to increased**



*Education opens the window to gender equality and better health and employment prospects for girls and young women.*

**female education accounts for 43 percent of the decline in malnutrition achieved between 1970 and 1995.**<sup>13</sup>

- **A cross country analysis of women in 65 low and middle income countries concluded that "doubling the proportion of women with a secondary education would reduce average fertility rates from 5.3 to 3.9 children per woman". The same study concluded that: "the expansion of female secondary education may be the best single policy for achieving substantial reductions in fertility."**<sup>14</sup>

UNICEF notes: "It is imperative at this stage that the world's commitment to

girls' education does not falter. Postponing meaningful gender parity by a few more years will be costly, not only for the individual girls whose lives are affected, but also for the whole Millennium Development enterprise. Investing in girls' education is a strategy that protects the rights of all children to a quality education and can jump-start all other development goals – beginning with gender equality and the empowerment of women."<sup>15</sup>

So how can girls' education be fostered and supported? As we have seen, there are strong commitments from the United Nations, and in the Millennium Development Goals. But words on paper, as usual, are not enough. If more girls are to receive the education that they need, there needs to be more investment into the



most important factors in keeping girls in school – incentive programmes, social protection, community school projects, improved sanitation, a relevant and appropriate quality curriculum that delivers and education that fits their needs.

### From policy to practice

The 2007 World Development Report from the World Bank points out that:

“Knowing what to do is not enough

– policies directed at young people often fail.” It gives three main reasons:

1. Many countries have policies on young people but fail to coordinate these across sectors, with the result that there are no overall priorities or lines of accountability.
2. Young people are rarely given a voice in designing and implementing policies. “Governments at all levels also need to be more open to listening to young people” says the World Bank.
3. There are few policies and programmes that can be hailed as success stories for young people. “More needs to be done to find out which policies and programmes improve youth outcomes and why,” continues the World Bank.<sup>16</sup>
4. We would like to add a fourth: that youth policies fail because they are often not gender disaggregated. Gender has become integrated into overall policies in many countries, but not, it seems, very often when it comes to young people. Girls’ and boys’ needs, as we have seen, are different, and this needs to be taken into account by governments, donors and international organisations.

### A better deal for girls – An Eight Point Action Plan

Girls are getting a raw deal. While education is the main key to changing their situation, this report has identified a number of actions that would considerably improve specific areas of their lives. Here are eight priorities.

#### 1. Listen to girls and let them participate.

Girls have the potential to articulate and secure their rights. This report has showcased a few of the voices of young women who are emerging from very difficult situations. There is a move towards the participation of children and young people in policy and decision-making. The voices of girls and young women need to be heard in these fora.

#### 2. Invest in girls and young women.

Adequate resources must be made available at all levels in order for girls and young women to secure their rights. Their needs are often different from those of older women and from boys and men. This is an investment not just in half the population of the world, but in the future for all.

#### 3. Change and enforce the law.

In many countries, discriminatory laws and practices relating to girls and young women prevail. Where this is the case, they should be reformed with a human rights perspective. Where laws to protect and support girls and young women already exist, they must be enforced.

#### 4. Change attitudes.

The situation of girls is more likely to improve and at a faster pace if men and boys can be brought on board. Attitudinal change is key, and this needs to be worked on in the family, in school and in society as a whole. As long as women are considered second-class citizens, girls and young women will never be able to achieve their full potential.

#### 5. A safety net for girls.

The poorest and most vulnerable girls and their families would benefit from comprehensive social support which could include regular and predictable grants, scholarships or stipends to encourage girls to go to school and supplementary nutrition.

#### 6. Get specific data on girls.

It has become clear during the course of researching this report that more data on girls and young women is urgently needed. Statistics and material are collected either on children or on women in general. For a clearer picture of



Girls, like these youngsters in Nicaragua, have the potential to articulate and secure their rights – but resources must be made available for them to do so.

what is happening to girls in today’s world, data disaggregated by sex and age has to be collected and used.

#### 7. Take a life cycle approach.

This report has shown that taking a life-cycle approach to improving the rights of girls means addressing discrimination at every stage from birth – or even before birth – until they are grown women. This has enabled us to see the pervasiveness of issues like violence throughout the life cycle of a girl, and to identify the critical points of vulnerability in her life.

#### 8. Learn and document.

The research for this report has shown just how little we really know about the lives of young women and how best to improve them. Systematic documentation and learning on girls’ rights and best practice is needed. Subsequent reports in this series will take specific areas and look at them in more detail.

‘Because I am a girl’ has provided many examples of girls and young women who are determined to improve their lives and the lives of others like them. Improvements in equality between boys and girls come about when there is political will, cultural change and when society is committed to women’s rights. This commitment has often been fostered by dedicated groups of women – sometimes young women, and sometimes men and boys as well – who have pushed through changes their mothers and grandmothers would never have believed possible. It is time to support them; to ensure that when a child is born she is not discriminated against simply because she is a girl.

*“...girl power is about being yourself, sticking up for your rights, and not being afraid of the challenges that the world throws at you.”<sup>17</sup>*

Girl, 17, Canada



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Section 2

Table 1: 1948 – 2007: 59 Years of International Legislation Specifically Addressing Girls’ Rights ..... 132

Table 2: Basic Indicators on Gender ..... 154

Table 3: Basic Indicators on Girls’ Education ..... 164

Table 4: Reproductive Health of Young Women ..... 174

Table 5: Under fives weight comparison ..... 183

Table 6: Girls and Young Women at Work ..... 184

For Further Information on Girls’ Rights..... 188

Table 1: 1948 – 2007: 59 Years of International Legislation Specifically Addressing Girls' Rights<sup>1</sup>

Instrument	Date of Adoption	Date of Entry into Force	Number of states signed ("S"), acceded ("A")/ratified ("R")			Discrimination	Universal birth registration	Protection Against Early marriage
			S	A	R			
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948	10 Dec 1948	10 Dec 1948				2 – Everyone is entitled to the rights and freedoms of the UDHR without discrimination		16(2) - Right to marry with free and full consent
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) 1966 <sup>2</sup>	21 Dec 1965	4 Jan 1969	85		173			2(1) - States Parties undertake to pursue the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination

1. This table outlines relevant articles of major pieces of international legislation where they relate to critical issues for girls. Unless otherwise indicated, all information has been sourced from: IAN BROWNLIE & GUY S. GOODWIN-GILL (eds.) (2002) Basic Documents on Human Rights (Fourth Edition), Oxford, OUP. Legal research was conducted pro-bono by Advocates for International Development, [www.a4id.org](http://www.a4id.org), [info@a4id.org](mailto:info@a4id.org)

2. Status of ratification as of 6 February 2007 confirmed at <http://untreaty.un.org/ENGLISH/bible/englishinternetbible/partI/chapterIV/treaty2.asp>

Protection Against Female Genital Cutting	Education	Health (including physical and mental)	Protection from abuse, violence and exploitation	Girls in the Criminal Justice System	Working Conditions
3 – Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person  5 – No-one shall be subject to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment	26(1)- Everyone has the right to education  Education shall be free and elementary education should be compulsory	25 - Everyone has the right to standard of living adequate for health and well-being. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance.  All children are entitled to the same social protection	3 – Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person  4 - No-one shall be held in slavery or servitude	3 – Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person  5 – No-one shall be subject to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment  6 - Everyone has the right to be recognised before the law  7 - Everyone has the right to be equal before the law  8 - Everyone has the right to effective remedy by competent courts/tribunal  10 - Everyone has the right to fair and public hearing	24 - Everyone has the right to rest and leisure  25(1) – Everyone has the right to social security
5(b) – States Parties guarantee the right of everyone, without discrimination, to security of person and protection against violence	5(e)(v) - States Parties guarantee the right of everyone, without discrimination, to education and training	5(e)(iv) - States Parties guarantee the right of everyone, without discrimination, to public health, medical care, social security and social services	5(b) - States Parties guarantee the right of everyone, without discrimination, to security of person and protection against violence	5(a) - States Parties guarantee the right of everyone, without discrimination, to equal treatment before tribunals  6 - States Parties shall ensure to everyone effective protection through competent tribunals	5(e)(i) - States Parties guarantee the right of everyone to favourable working conditions



**Table 1: 1948 – 2007: 59 Years of International Legislation Specifically Addressing Girls' Rights – continued**

Instrument	Date of Adoption	Date of Entry into Force	Number of states signed ("S"), acceded ("A")/ratified ("R")			Discrimination	Universal birth registration	Protection Against Early marriage
			S	A	R			
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) 1966 <sup>3</sup>	16 Dec 1966	23 Mar 1976	67		160	2 – States Parties must ensure the rights recognised apply to all individuals without discrimination  3 – States Parties undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the rights set out in the Covenant	24(2) - Every child shall be registered immediately after birth and named	23(3) - No-one shall enter into marriage without free and full consent  3 – States Parties undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the rights set out in the Covenant
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) 1966 <sup>4</sup>	19 Dec 1966	3 Jan 1976	66		155	2 – States Parties must ensure the rights recognised are exercised for all individuals without discrimination  3 – States Parties undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the rights set out in the Covenant		10(1)- Marriage must be entered into with full and free consent

3. Status of ratification as of 6 February 2007 confirmed at <http://untreaty.un.org/ENGLISH/bible/englishinternetbible/partI/chapterIV/treaty6.asp>  
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Protection Against Female Genital Cutting	Education	Health (including physical and mental)	Protection from abuse, violence and exploitation	Girls in the Criminal Justice System	Working Conditions
7 - No-one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment	25(c) – Everyone shall have the right and opportunity to equal access to public services  3 – States Parties undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the rights set out in the Covenant	25(c) – Everyone shall have the right and opportunity to equal access to public services  3 – States Parties undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the rights set out in the Covenant	8 - No-one shall be held in slavery or servitude	9 – Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person  10(1) – All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity  10(2) – Accused juveniles shall be separated from accused adults and brought for adjudication as quickly as possible  14(1) - All persons shall be equal before courts/tribunals  14(4) – Court procedures must take into account the age of juveniles and the desirability of promoting rehabilitation	8(3)- No-one shall be required to perform forced/compulsory labour
	13(1) – States Parties recognise the right to education directed towards the full development of the human personality.  13(2) – Primary education shall be compulsory and available to all free of charge	10(2)- Special protection should be accorded to mothers before and after child birth, including the right to paid leave with adequate social security benefits  12(1) – States Parties recognise the right to highest attainable standard of physical and mental health 12(2) – In order to achieve this right, provision should be made for the reduction of child mortality and the creation of conditions for the healthy development of the child			6 – States Parties recognise the right to work, including the right to technical and vocational guidance and training  7 - States Parties recognise the right to safe and healthy working conditions; right to rest, leisure and periodic holidays with pay  9 – States Parties recognise the right to social security  10(3) - Children and young persons shall be protected from economic and social exploitation. States should set age limits below which the employment of child labour is prohibited and punishable by law

**Table 1: 1948 – 2007: 59 Years of International Legislation Specifically Addressing Girls' Rights – continued**

Instrument	Date of Adoption	Date of Entry into Force	Number of states signed ("S"), acceded ("A")/ratified ("R")			Discrimination	Universal birth registration	Protection Against Early marriage
			S	A	R			
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 1979 <sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup>	18 Dec 1979	3 Sept 1981	98		185	2(f) – States Parties to take all appropriate measures to modify or abolish existing laws which constitute discrimination against women  2(g) – States Parties to repeal penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women		5(a) – States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to modify social and cultural patterns to eliminate prejudices of customary and all other practices which refer to inferiority of women  16(1) – States Parties shall ensure the right to marry and to freely choose one's partner  16(2) – The marriage of a child shall have no legal effect and all necessary action shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage

5. The Beijing Declaration (1995) adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, Beijing, 15 September 1995 reaffirms the commitment to ensuring “the full implementation of the human rights of women and of the girl child as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms”, which suggests that the rights outlined in CEDAW apply equally to both women and girls. (Beijing Declaration (1995), from: <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/e5dplw.htm>, accessed: 14/02/07)

6. Status of ratification as of 6 February 2007 confirmed at <http://untreaty.un.org/ENGLISH/bible/englishinternetbible/partI/chapterIV/treaty10.asp>

Protection Against Female Genital Cutting	Education	Health (including physical and mental)	Protection from abuse, violence and exploitation	Girls in the Criminal Justice System	Working Conditions
2(f) – States Parties to take all appropriate measures to modify or abolish existing laws which constitute discrimination against women  5(a) - States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to modify social and cultural patterns to eliminate prejudices of customary and all other practices which refer to inferiority of women	5(b) – States Parties should take all appropriate measures to ensure education includes the proper understanding of maternity function and common responsibility of men and women in the development of their children  10 – States Parties shall ensure the right to equality of men and women in education  10(f) – States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to reduce female student drop-out rates  14(2)(d) – States Parties shall ensure the right of women to obtain all types of training and education	10(h) – States Parties should take all appropriate measures to ensure educational information to ensure health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning  12(1) – States Parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination in the provision of health care  14(2)(b) - States Parties shall ensure the right of women to access to health care facilities for rural women	6 – States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to suppress trafficking of women and exploitation of prostitution of women		5(a) - States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to modify social and cultural patterns to eliminate prejudices of customary and all other practices which refer to inferiority of women

**Table 1: 1948 – 2007: 59 Years of International Legislation Specifically Addressing Girls' Rights – continued**

Instrument	Date of Adoption	Date of Entry into Force	Number of states signed ("S"), acceded ("A")/ratified ("R")			Discrimination	Universal birth registration	Protection Against Early marriage
			S	A	R			
Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (CRC) <sup>7</sup>	20 Nov 1989	2 Sept 1990	140		193	2(2) – States Parties are obliged to respect and ensure treaty rights to each child without discrimination, including on the basis of status, activities opinions or beliefs of the child's family  8 – States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve identity	7(1) – The child shall be registered immediately after birth and have the right to name and nationality  8 – States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve identity	6 – States Parties recognise the right to life and maximum survival and development  24(3) – States Parties shall take all effective and appropriate measure to abolish traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children

Protection Against Female Genital Cutting	Education	Health (including physical and mental)	Protection from abuse, violence and exploitation	Girls in the Criminal Justice System	Working Conditions
24(3) – States Parties shall take all effective and appropriate measure to abolish traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children  37(a) – States Parties shall ensure that no child shall be subject to torture and degrading treatment	28 – States Parties recognise the right to education on the basis of equal opportunity  32(1) – States Parties recognise the right to be protected from work that interferes with education  39 – States shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery of child victims of neglect, exploitation, abuse, torture or any other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, or conflict	17 – States are obliged to ensure child has access to appropriate information, particularly that aimed at the promotion of their well-being and physical and mental health  19(1) – States Parties shall take all appropriate measure to protect the child from all forms of violence  23 – States Parties recognise the right of disabled children to a full and decent life and to special care  24 – States Parties recognise the right to the highest attainable standard of health and health services  27(1) – States Parties recognise the right to an adequate standard of living  39 – States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the recovery and reintegration of child victims	6 – States Parties recognise the right to life and maximum survival and development  11(1) – States Parties shall take measures to combat illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad  19(1) – States Parties shall take all appropriate measure to protect the child from all forms of violence  22(1) – States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the protection and enjoyment of applicable rights for refugee children  32(1) – States parties recognise the right of children to be protected from economic exploitation and hazardous work  33 – States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to protect children from illicit use of drugs and use of children in drug production and trafficking  34 – States Parties undertake to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse  35 – States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to prevent abduction, sale or trafficking of children  36 – States Parties shall protect against all other forms of exploitation	3(1) – The best interests of the child shall be of primary consideration in courts of law  9(4) – States Parties shall provide parents with essential details of the whereabouts of children separated from their parents  12(2) – States Parties shall provide opportunity to be heard in any judicial proceedings  19(1) – States Parties shall take all appropriate measure to protect the child from all forms of violence  40(1) – States Parties recognise the rights of children accused of infringing the law, including the right to be treated with dignity	26(1) – States Parties recognise the right to benefit from social security  31 – States Parties recognise the right to leisure, play and participation in cultural life  32(1) – States Parties recognise the right to protection from economic exploitation and work that is harmful, hazardous or interferes with child's education  34 – States Parties undertake to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse  38(3) – States Parties shall refrain from recruiting those under 15 into their armed forces.

7. Status of ratification as of 6 February 2007 confirmed at <http://untreaty.un.org/ENGLISH/bible/englishinternetbible/partI/chapterIV/treaty19.asp>



**Table 1: 1948 – 2007: 59 Years of International Legislation Specifically Addressing Girls' Rights – continued**

Instrument	Date of Adoption	Date of Entry into Force	Number of states signed ("S"), acceded ("A")/ratified ("R")			Discrimination	Universal birth registration	Protection Against Early marriage
			S	A	R			
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (CRC OP-1) <sup>8</sup>	25 May 2000	12 Feb 2002	122		111			
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (CRC OP-2) <sup>9</sup>	25 May 2000	18 Jan 2002	115		117			
Convention of the Rights of persons with Disabilities <sup>10</sup> (Adopted on 20 December 2006 during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, opening for signature on 30 March 2007) <sup>10</sup>	13 Dec 2006	Adopted 13/12/06  Open for signature 30/03/07				4(1) – States Parties shall ensure and promote the full and equal enjoyment of human rights but all persons with disabilities without discrimination  6(1) – Recognising that women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple discrimination, States Parties shall take measures to ensure their full enjoyment of human rights  7 – States Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by children with disabilities	18(2) – Children with disabilities shall be registered immediately after birth	23(1)(a) – States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the right of disabled persons to marry should be founded on full and free consent of the intending spouses

8. Status of ratification as of 6 February 2007 confirmed at <http://untreaty.un.org/ENGLISH/bible/englishinternetbible/partI/chapterIV/treaty21.asp>

9. Status of ratification as of 6 February 2007 confirmed at <http://untreaty.un.org/ENGLISH/bible/englishinternetbible/partI/chapterIV/treaty22.asp>

10. Status of ratification as of 5 February 2007 confirmed at <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

Protection Against Female Genital Cutting	Education	Health (including physical and mental)	Protection from abuse, violence and exploitation	Girls in the Criminal Justice System	Working Conditions
			2 – States Parties shall ensure those under 18 shall not be compelled to join their armed forces		3 – States Parties shall raise the minimum age for the recruitment into their armed forces to 18 and ensure such recruitment is genuinely voluntary
	9(2) – States Parties shall promote the awareness of the general public, including children, on the prevention and harmful effects of the sale of children, prostitution and child pornography, including through education and training	9(3) – States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure full physical and psychological recovery of victims  10(2) – States Parties shall promote international co-operation to assist victims in their recovery	1 – States Parties shall prohibit sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography  10(1) – States Parties shall strengthen international cooperation to prevent, detect, investigate, prosecute and punish those responsible for acts involving the sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography and child sex tourism	8(1) – States Parties shall adopt appropriate measures to ensure the protection of the rights and interests of children in criminal justice process  9(4) – States Parties shall ensure child victims have adequate access to seek compensation	1 – States Parties shall prohibit sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
15(1) – No-one shall be subject to torture and cruel, unusual or degrading treatment	8 – States Parties shall adopt immediate, effective and appropriate measures to raise awareness of and respect of the rights of persons with disabilities, including through fostering respect for the rights of persons with disabilities at all levels of the education system  16(1) – States Parties shall take all necessary measures to protect persons with disabilities from exploitation, violence and abuse, including educational measures  24(1) – States Parties shall recognise the equal rights of persons with disabilities to education and shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels	25 – States Parties recognise that persons with disabilities have the right to the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination, including to treatment which minimise and prevent further disability among children	3(h) – The Convention shall promote respect for the evolving capacity of children with disabilities and their right to preserve their identity  16 – States Parties shall take all necessary measures to protect persons with disabilities from exploitation, violence and abuse, including women- and child-focused legislation and policies		27(2) – States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are not held in slavery and are protected from forced labour  28(2) – States Parties shall ensure access of persons with disabilities, and particularly women and girls, to social protection and poverty reduction programmes

**Table 1: 1948 – 2007: 59 Years of International Legislation Specifically Addressing Girls' Rights – continued**

Instrument	Date of Adoption	Date of Entry into Force	Number of states signed ("S"), acceded ("A")/ratified ("R")			Discrimination	Universal birth registration	Protection Against Early marriage
			S	A	R			
Minimum Age Convention 1973 (No.138) <sup>11</sup>	26 June 1973	19 June 1976			147			
Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention 1999 (No.182) <sup>12</sup>	17 June 1999	19 Nov 2000			163			
European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms as amended by Protocol No.11 <sup>13</sup>	4 Nov 1950	3 Sept 1953	46		46	1 – The High Contracting Parties will secure to everyone in their jurisdiction the rights of the Convention  14 – The rights and freedoms of the Convention shall be secured without discrimination		12 – Men and women of marriageable age have the right to marry
Protocol No.1 <sup>14</sup>	20 Mar 1952	18 May 1954	45		43			

11. Status of ratification as of 7 February 2007 confirmed at <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp1.htm>  
12. Status of ratification as of 7 February 2007 confirmed at <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp1.htm>

Protection Against Female Genital Cutting	Education	Health (including physical and mental)	Protection from abuse, violence and exploitation	Girls in the Criminal Justice System	Working Conditions
	2(3) – The minimum age for entering employment should not be lower than the age for completing compulsory schooling  6 – The Convention does not apply to work done within an educational environment  7(1) – Light work may be permitted for children aged 13-15 if it does not prejudice their educational programme	1 – Members undertake to progressively raise the minimum age for employment consistent with the fullest mental and physical development of young people  7(1) – Light work may be permitted for children aged 13-15 if it does not prejudice their health and development	3(1) – The minimum age for employment that is likely to jeopardise health, safety or morals should not be less than 18  5(3) – As a minimum, the Convention shall apply to mining; manufacturing; construction; electricity; gas and water; sanitary services; transport; storage and communications; plantations and other agricultural work		1 – Members undertake to abolish child labour, progressively raising the minimum age for employment  2(4) – If a Member has insufficiently developed education facilities, a lower minimum employment age may be specified
	7(2) – Members shall take account of the importance of education in eliminating child labour  8 –Members are required to assist one another in eliminating the worst forms of child labour by providing universal education	3(d) – Work which is likely to harm the health of children is included in the definition of “the worst forms of child labour”	3 – The “worst forms of child labour” is defined as: slavery, trafficking, prostitution and work which is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children		6(1) – Members should implement programmes to eliminate the worst forms of child labour as a priority
3 – No-one shall be subject to torture and inhuman or degrading treatment			3 – No-one shall be subject to torture and inhuman or degrading treatment  4(1) – No-one shall be held in slavery or servitude  4(2) - No-one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour  5 – Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person	6(1) – Everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing in the determination of any criminal charge against him	4(2) - No-one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour
	2 – No person shall be denied the right to education				

13. Status of ratification as of 6 February 2007 confirmed at <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/?ChercheSig.asp?NT=005&CM=8&DF=2/6/2007&CL=ENG>  
14. Status of ratification as of 6 February 2007 confirmed at <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/?ChercheSig.asp?NT=009&CM=8&DF=2/6/2007&CL=ENG>

**Table 1: 1948 – 2007: 59 Years of International Legislation Specifically Addressing Girls' Rights – continued**

Instrument	Date of Adoption	Date of Entry into Force	Number of states signed ("S"), acceded ("A")/ratified ("R")			Discrimination	Universal birth registration	Protection Against Early marriage
			S	A	R			
Protocol No.7 <sup>15</sup>	22 Nov 1984	01 Nov 1988	44		39			5 – Spouses shall enjoy equality of rights as to marriage
Protocol No.12 <sup>16</sup>	4 Nov 2000	1 April 2005	35		14			1 – The enjoyment of any right set forth by law shall be secured without discrimination of any kind
European Social Charter <sup>17</sup>	18 Oct 1961	26 Feb 1965	32		27			

15. Status of ratification as of 6 February 2007 confirmed at <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/?ChercheSig.asp?NT=117&CM=8&DF=2/6/2007&CL=ENG>

16. Status of ratification as of 6 February 2007 confirmed at <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/?ChercheSig.asp?NT=177&CM=8&DF=2/6/2007&CL=ENG>

17. Status of ratification as of 6 February 2007 confirmed at <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/?ChercheSig.asp?NT=035&CM=8&DF=2/6/2007&CL=ENG>

Protection Against Female Genital Cutting	Education	Health (including physical and mental)	Protection from abuse, violence and exploitation	Girls in the Criminal Justice System	Working Conditions
			5 – Spouses shall enjoy equality of rights as to marriage, during marriage and at the event of its dissolution	2 – Everyone convicted of a criminal offence shall have the right to have his sentence or conviction reviewed	
				1 – The enjoyment of any right set forth by law shall be secured without discrimination of any kind	1 – The enjoyment of any right set forth by law shall be secured without discrimination of any kind
	7(3) – Contracting Parties undertake to limit the employment of children and young people so as not to deprive them of the full benefit of their education  9 – Contracting Parties undertake to provide vocational guidance  10 – Contracting Parties undertake to ensure the effective exercise of the right to vocational training  15 – Contracting Parties undertake to ensure the effective exercise right of physically or mentally disabled persons to vocational training, rehabilitation and social resettlement	11 – Contracting Parties undertake to ensure the effective exercise of the right to protection of health  13 – Contracting Parties undertake to ensure the effective exercise of the right to social and medical assistance  14 – Contracting Parties undertake to ensure the effective exercise of the right to benefit from social welfare services  15 – Contracting Parties undertake to ensure the effective exercise right of physically or mentally disabled persons to vocational training, rehabilitation and social resettlement	17 – With a view to ensuring the right of mothers and children to social and economic protection, Contracting Parties will take all necessary measures to that end		Part I(7) – Children have the right to special protection against physical and moral hazards  7(1) – Contracting shall provide a minimum age for entry into employment  12(1) – Contracting Parties undertake to establish or maintain a system of social security



**Table 1: 1948 – 2007: 59 Years of International Legislation Specifically Addressing Girls' Rights – continued**

Instrument	Date of Adoption	Date of Entry into Force	Number of states signed ("S"), acceded ("A")/ratified ("R")			Discrimination	Universal birth registration	Protection Against Early marriage
			S	A	R			
African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights <sup>18</sup>	June 1981	21 Oct 1986; Registered with the UN on 10 Sept 1991	41	-	53	2 – Everyone shall be entitled to equal enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set out in the Charter without distinction of any kind  18(3) – The State shall ensure the elimination of every discrimination against women  28 – Every individual has the duty to respect and consider fellow individuals without discrimination		18(3) – The State shall ensure the elimination of every discrimination against women
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) <sup>19</sup> <sup>20</sup>	11 July 2003	25 Nov 2005	42	-	20	2(1) – States Parties shall combat all forms of violence against women through appropriate legislative, institutional and other measures  3(1) – Every woman shall have the right to dignity  5 – States Parties will condemn all forms of harmful practice which negatively affect women and take all necessary measures to eliminate such practices  6 – The minimum age for marriage shall be 18 years and marriage must take place with the free and full consent of both parties		2(2) – States Parties shall commit themselves to eliminating harmful social and cultural traditional practices  3(1) – Every woman shall have the right to dignity  5 – States Parties will condemn all forms of harmful practice which negatively affect women and take all necessary measures to eliminate such practices  6 – The minimum age for marriage shall be 18 years and marriage must take place with the free and full consent of both parties

Protection Against Female Genital Cutting	Education	Health (including physical and mental)	Protection from abuse, violence and exploitation	Girls in the Criminal Justice System	Working Conditions
5 – All forms of torture and cruel, unusual or degrading punishment shall be prohibited  18(3) – The State shall ensure the elimination of every discrimination against women	13(2) – Every citizen shall have equal access to public service  17 – Every individual shall have the right to education, cultural life and recognition of values	13(2) – Every citizen shall have equal access to public service  16 – Every individual shall have the right to enjoy best attainable state of physical and mental health  18(1) – The state shall protect the of physical health of family as the basis of society	5 – All forms of exploitation, such as slavery and torture and cruel, unusual or degrading punishment shall be prohibited  6 – No persons shall be arbitrarily deprived of freedom	3 – Every individual shall be equal before the law and have equal protection of law  7 – Every individual has the right to have cause heard, no unfair punishment  26 – States have the duty to guarantee the independence of Courts	5 – All forms of exploitation, such as slavery, shall be prohibited  15 – Every citizen shall have the right to equitable working conditions  17 – Every individual shall have the right to education, cultural life and recognition of values
2(2) – States Parties shall commit themselves to eliminating harmful social and cultural traditional practices  3(1) – Every woman shall have the right to dignity  4(1) – All forms of exploitation and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment shall be prohibited  5(b) – States Parties shall prohibit all forms of female genital mutilation  14 – States Parties shall ensure that the rights of women to health, including sexual and reproductive rights, are respected and promoted	12 – States Parties will take measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and guarantee equal access to education and training, taking positive action to promote education for women and the retention of girls in schools  14(g) – States Parties will ensure the right to family planning education	14 – States Parties will ensure that the rights of women to health, including sexual and reproductive rights, are respected and promoted  15 – States Parties will ensure women have access to adequate nutritious food  18(1) – Women shall have the right to live in a healthy and sustainable environment	3(3) – States Parties shall take measures to prohibit the degradation and exploitation of women  4(1) – All forms of exploitation and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment shall be prohibited  4(2)(a) – States Parties shall prohibit all forms of violence against women, including unwanted sex  4(2)(g) – States Parties shall prevent and condemn trafficking in women  10(4) – States Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure that no child, particularly girls, take direct part in armed conflict  13(d) – States Parties will protect women from exploitation by their employers	8 – Women and men shall be equal before the law  24(b) – Women in detention have the right be treated with dignity	10(4) – States Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure that no child, particularly girls, take direct part in armed conflict  13(g) – States Parties will introduce a minimum age for work and will prohibit and combat all forms of exploitation of children, especially the girl-child

18. Status of ratification as of 7 February 2007 confirmed at <http://www.africa-union.org/root/AU/Documents/Treaties/List/African%20Charter%20on%20Human%20and%20Peoples%20Rights.pdf>  
19. Status of ratification as of 5 February 2007 confirmed at <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/africa/protocol-women2>  
20. Status of ratification as of 6 February 2007 confirmed at <http://www.africa-union.org/root/AU/Documents/Treaties/List/Protocol%20on%20the%20Rights%20of%20Women.pdf>

**Table 1: 1948 – 2007: 59 Years of International Legislation Specifically Addressing Girls' Rights – continued**

Instrument	Date of Adoption	Date of Entry into Force	Number of states signed ("S"), acceded ("A")/ratified ("R")			Discrimination	Universal birth registration	Protection Against Early marriage
			S	A	R			
African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child <sup>21</sup>	11 July 1990	29 Nov 1999	39	-	39	3 – Every child shall be entitled to the rights and freedoms of the Charter without discrimination	6(2) – Every child shall be registered immediately after birth	11(6) – States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that girls who become pregnant before completing education are able to continue with their education  16 – States Parties will take specific legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and child abuse  19(1) – Every child shall be entitled to the enjoyment of parental care and protection  21(2) – Marriage or betrothal of girls and boys shall be prohibited and the minimum age for marriage shall be specified as 18  27 – States Parties shall undertake to prevent all forms of sexual exploitation

Protection Against Female Genital Cutting	Education	Health (including physical and mental)	Protection from abuse, violence and exploitation	Girls in the Criminal Justice System	Working Conditions
16 – States Parties will take specific legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and child abuse  21(1) – States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate harmful social and cultural practices, particularly those who are prejudicial to the health of the child or are discriminatory to the child	11(1) – Every child shall have the right to an education  11(3) – States Parties shall take appropriate measures to achieve full realization of right to education  11(3)(e) – States Parties shall take special measures to ensure equal access to education for girls	5(2) – States Parties shall ensure the survival, protection and development of the child  11(2)(h) – States Parties shall promote children's understanding of primary health care  13 – States Parties shall ensure that disabled children have the right to special measures of protection  14 – Every child shall have the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health  21(1) – States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate harmful social and cultural practices, particularly those who are prejudicial to the health of the child  28 – States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to protect children from drug abuse	5(2) – States Parties shall ensure the survival, protection and development of the child  16 – States Parties will take specific measures to protect the child from all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and child abuse  19(1) – Every child shall be entitled to the enjoyment of parental care and protection  22(2) – States Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure children do not take part in hostilities  24(d) – States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure adoption does not result in trafficking  27 – States Parties shall undertake to prevent all forms of sexual exploitation  29 – States Parties shall take appropriate measures to prevent the sale, trafficking and abduction of children	4(2)– Children's views shall be heard and considered in all judicial proceedings affecting them  5(3) – The death sentence shall not be pronounced for children  17(1) – Every child accused or guilty of infringing penal law shall have the right to special treatment  17(4) – There shall be a minimum age below which children shall be presumed not to have the capacity to infringe the penal law	5(2) – States Parties shall ensure the survival, protection and development of the child  12 – States Parties recognise the right to leisure, recreation and cultural activities  15(1) – Every child shall be protected from economic exploitation and hazardous work  22(2) – States shall take all necessary measures to ensure children do not take part in hostilities  27 – States Parties shall undertake to prevent all forms of sexual exploitation  29 – States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to prevent the sale, trafficking and abduction of children

21. Status of ratification as of 6 February 2007 confirmed at <http://www.africa-union.org/root/AU/Documents/Treaties/List/Protocol%20on%20the%20Rights%20of%20Women.pdf>

**Table 1: 1948 – 2007: 59 Years of International Legislation Specifically Addressing Girls' Rights – continued**

Instrument	Date of Adoption	Date of Entry into Force	Number of states signed ("S"), acceded ("A")/ratified ("R")			Discrimination	Universal birth registration	Protection Against Early marriage
			S	A	R			
American Convention on Human Rights 1969 <sup>22</sup>	22 Nov 1969	18 July 1978	19	0	25	1(1) – States Parties undertake to respect the rights outlined in the Convention without discrimination	18 – Every person has the right to a given name and to the surnames of his/her parents	17(3) – No marriage shall be entered into without the free and full consent of the spouses  19 – Every child has the right to protection required by their status as a minor
Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1988 (Protocol of San Salvador) <sup>23</sup>	17 Nov 1988	16 Nov 1999	16		14	3 – States Parties undertake to guarantee the rights set out in the Protocol without discrimination		16 – Every child has the right to the special protection of family, society and the State afforded by their status as a minor

22. Status of ratification as of 7 February 2007 confirmed at <http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/sigs/b-32.html>

23. Status of ratification as of 7 February 2007 confirmed at <http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/sigs/a-52.html>

Protection Against Female Genital Cutting	Education	Health (including physical and mental)	Protection from abuse, violence and exploitation	Girls in the Criminal Justice System	Working Conditions
5(2) – No-one shall be subject to torture or cruel, unusual or degrading treatment  19 – Every child has the right to protection required by their status as a minor			5(2) – No-one shall be subject to torture or cruel, unusual or degrading treatment  6(1) – No-one shall be subject to slavery or to involuntary servitude	4(5) – Capital punishment shall not be imposed on those who were under 18 when the crime was committed  5(5) – Minors subject to criminal proceedings shall be separated from adults and treated according to their status as minors  8(1) – Everyone has the right to a fair trial  19 – Every child has the right to protection required by their status as a minor	6(2) – No-one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour  19 – Every child has the right to protection required by their status as a minor
16 – Every child has the right to the special protection of family, society and the State afforded by their status as a minor	13(1) – Everyone has the right to education  13(3)(a) – Primary education should be compulsory and accessible to all without cost  16 – Every child has the right to free and compulsory education, at least at the elementary stage	10(1) – Everyone shall have the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health  10(2) – States Parties will ensure universal immunization against the principal infectious diseases and will satisfy the health needs of the most vulnerable  11(1) – Everyone shall have the right to a healthy environment  12(1) – Everyone has the right to adequate nutrition  15(3) – States Parties shall provide special care to mothers during the period around childbirth and shall guarantee adequate nutrition for children	7(f) – States Parties undertake to prohibit all work that is hazardous to the health, safety and morals of children under 18 years  16 – Every child has the right to the special protection of family, society and the State afforded by their status as a minor	16 – Every child has the right to the special protection family, society and the State afforded by their status as a minor	7(f) – States Parties undertake to prohibit all work that is hazardous to the health, safety and morals of children under 18 years years. No work undertaken by those under 16 should interfere with their school attendance or benefit from education  9(1) – Everyone shall have the right to social security  16 – Every child has the right to the special protection of family, society and the State afforded by their status as a minor



**Table 1: 1948 – 2007: 59 Years of International Legislation Specifically Addressing Girls' Rights – continued**

Instrument	Date of Adoption	Date of Entry into Force	Number of states signed ("S"), acceded ("A")/ratified ("R")			Discrimination	Universal birth registration	Protection Against Early marriage
			S	A	R			
Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women 1994 (Convention of Belem do Para) <sup>24</sup>	9 June 1994	5 March 1995	26		32	6(a) – Every woman has the right to be free from all forms of discrimination	6(a) – Every woman has the right to be free from all forms of discrimination	6(a) – Every woman has the right to be free from all forms of discrimination  6(b) – Every woman has the right to be valued and educated free from stereotyped patterns of social and cultural behaviour  8(b) – States Parties will undertake progressively specific measures to counteract prejudices, customs and all other practices of men and women, including through education

Protection Against Female Genital Cutting	Education	Health (including physical and mental)	Protection from abuse, violence and exploitation	Girls in the Criminal Justice System	Working Conditions
3 – Every woman has the right to be free from violence in both the public and private spheres  4(d) – Every woman has the right to be free from torture  6(a) – Every woman has the right to be free from all forms of discrimination  8(b) – States Parties will undertake progressively specific measures to counteract prejudices, customs and all other practices of men and women which legitimise or exacerbate violence against women	4(j) – Every woman has the right to equal access to the public services of her country  6(b) – Every woman has the right to be valued and educated free from stereotyped patterns of social and cultural behaviour  8(b) – States will take all reasonable measures to challenge prejudicial social and cultural patterns of men and women, including through education	4(j) – Every woman has the right to equal access to the public services of her country	3 – Every woman has the right to be free from violence in both the public and private spheres  4(b) – Every woman has the right to have her physical, mental and moral integrity respected  7(e) – States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to amend or repeal laws and practices which sustain the persistence and tolerance of violence against women  8(b) – States Parties will undertake progressively specific measures to counteract prejudices, customs and all other practices of men and women which legitimise or exacerbate violence against women	7(e) – States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to amend or repeal laws and practices which sustain the persistence and tolerance of violence against women	

24. Status of ratification as of 7 February 2007 confirmed at <http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/Sigs/a-61.html>

Table 2: Basic Indicators on Gender<sup>1</sup>

Table 2: Basic Indicators on Gender <sup>a</sup>				Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schools (%)									
		Gender-related development index (GDI)		Life expectancy at birth (years) 2004		Adult literacy rate (% ages 15 and older) 2004				incomec (PPP US\$) 2004		HDI rank minus GDI rank d	
HDI rank		Rank	Value	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male		
HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT													
1	Norway	1	0.962	82.0	77.1	..e	..e	105	96	33,034	43,950	0	
2	Iceland	2	0.958	82.7	79.0	..e	..e	102f	91f	27,496	38,603	0	
3	Australia	3	0.956	83.0	77.9	..e	..e	114	112	24,966	35,832	0	
4	Ireland	4	0.951	80.5	75.4	..e	..e	101	97	26,160	51,633	0	
5	Sweden	5	0.949	82.5	78.1	..e	..e	102	91	26,408	32,724	0	
6	Canada	7	0.947	82.6	77.6	..e	..e	96f,g	90f,g	24,277h	38,374h	-1	
7	Japan	13	0.942	85.6	78.6	..e	..e	84	86	18,130	40,885	-5	
8	United States	8	0.946	80.2	74.8	..e	..e	97	89	30,581h	49,075h	1	
9	Switzerland	10	0.944	83.4	77.8	..e	..e	83	88	25,314	41,258	0	
10	Netherlands	9	0.945	81.2	75.8	..e	..e	98	99	24,652	39,035	2	
11	Finland	11	0.943	81.9	75.3	..e	..e	104	97	24,862	35,263	1	
12	Luxembourg	6	0.949	81.6	75.3	..e	..e	89i	88i	45,938j	94,696j	1	
13	Belgium	12	0.943	82.1	75.9	..e	..e	96	93	24,123	38,338	1	
14	Austria	17	0.937	82.0	76.2	..e	..e	92	90	20,032	45,095	-3	
15	Denmark	15	0.940	79.6	75.0	..e	..e	106	97	27,048	36,882	0	
16	France	14	0.940	83.1	76.0	..e	..e	95	91	23,015	35,922	2	
17	Italy	18	0.934	83.2	77.1	98..e	98.8e	92	87	18,070h	38,902h	-1	
18	United Kingdom	16	0.938	80.8	76.2	..e	..e	96f	90f	24,448	37,506	2	
19	Spain	19	0.933	83.3	76.0	..e	..e	99	93	16,751h	33,648h	0	
20	New Zealand	20	0.932	81.5	77.0	..e	..e	105	95	19,264	27,711	0	
21	Germany	21	0.928	81.7	75.9	..e	..e	88f	89f	20,851	36,114	0	
22	Hong Kong, China (SAR)	..	..	84.8	78.9	..	..	74	79	20,637	42,166	..	
23	Israel	22	0.925	82.0	77.8	95.9	98.5	92	87	19,165h	29,714h	0	
24	Greece	23	0.917	81.0	75.7	94.2e	97.8e	96	91	15,728	28,837	0	
25	Singapore	..	..	80.8	77.0	88.6	96.6	..	..	18,905	37,125	..	
26	Korea, Rep. of	25	0.905	80.9	73.7	..e	..e	88	101	12,912	28,036	-1	
27	Slovenia	24	0.908	80.2	72.9	..e	..e	100	91	15,992h	26,129h	1	
28	Portugal	26	0.902	80.8	74.1	..e	..e	93	86	14,635	24,971	0	
29	Cyprus	27	0.900	81.2	76.2	95.1	98.6	79	78	17,012	28,891	0	
30	Czech Republic	28	0.881	78.9	72.5	..e	..e	82	81	13,141	26,017	0	
31	Barbados	..	..	78.6	71.7	..k	..l	94g	84g	..h	..h	..	
32	Malta	29	0.869	80.9	76.1	89.2m	86.4m	81	82	12,226	25,644	0	
33	Kuwait	31	0.864	79.7	75.4	91.0	94.4	79f	69f	9,623h	25,847h	-1	
34	Brunei Darussalam	..	..	79.1	74.5	90.2	95.2	78f	76f	..h	..h	..	
35	Hungary	30	0.867	77.1	68.9	..e	..e	90	85	13,311	20,666	1	
36	Argentina	32	0.859	78.4	70.9	97.2	97.2	94g	85g	9,258h	17,518h	0	
37	Poland	33	0.859	78.6	70.5	..e	..e	90	82	9,746h	16,400h	0	
38	Chile	37	0.850	81.1	75.1	95.6	95.8	80	82	6,134h	15,715h	-3	
39	Bahrain	38	0.849	76.0	73.2	83.6	88.6	89f	82f	9,654	29,107	-3	
40	Estonia	34	0.856	77.2	65.8	99.8e	99.8e	98	86	11,377h	18,285h	2	
41	Lithuania	35	0.856	78.0	66.9	99.6e	99.6e	96	87	10,839	15,699	2	
42	Slovakia	36	0.853	78.1	70.3	..e	..e	78	75	10,856h	18,617h	2	
43	Uruguay	39	0.847	79.2	71.9	..k	..l	95f,g	84f,g	6,764h	12,240h	0	
44	Croatia	40	0.844	78.6	71.6	97.1	99.3	75g	72g	9,872	14,690	0	

Table 2: Basic Indicators on Gender – continued

		Gender-related development index (GDI)		Life expectancy at birth (years) 2004		Adult literacy rate (% ages 15 and older) 2004		Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schools (%) 2004		incomec (PPP US\$) 2004		HDI rank minus GDI rank d
HDI rank		Rank	Value	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
45	Latvia	41	0.843	77.2	66.1	99.7e	99.8e	97	84	9,530	14,171	0
46	Qatar	..	..	76.2	71.4	88.6	89.1	82	71	..h	..h	..
47	Seychelles	..	..	..	..	92.3	91.4	82	77	..	..	..
48	Costa Rica	42	0.831	80.8	76.0	95.1	94.7	69f,g	67f,g	5,969	12,878	0
49	United Arab Emirates	43	0.829	81.1	76.7	..	..l	68f,g	54f,g	7,630h	31,788h	0
50	Cuba	..	..	79.5	75.8	99.8e	99.8e	81g	79g	..h	..h	..
51	Saint Kitts and Nevis	..	..	..	..	..	..	81	78	..	..	..
52	Bahamas	..	..	73.4	67.1	..	..	66f	65f	14,414h	20,459h	..
53	Mexico	45	0.812	77.8	72.8	89.6	92.4	76	75	5,594	14,202	-1
54	Bulgaria	44	0.814	75.8	69.1	97.7	98.7	81	81	6,406	9,855	1
55	Tonga	46	0.809	73.7	71.1	99.0m	98.8m	81f	79f	5,026h	10,606h	0
56	Oman	57	0.785	76.0	73.1	73.5	86.8	68f	69f	4,273h	23,676h	-10
57	Trinidad and Tobago	48	0.805	72.8	67.0	..k	..l	68	66	7,766h	16,711h	0
58	Panama	47	0.806	77.6	72.5	91.2	92.5	83	76	5,219	9,300	2
59	Antigua and Barbuda	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
60	Romania	49	0.804	75.2	68.0	96.3	98.4	77	73	6,723	10,325	1
61	Malaysia	51	0.795	75.8	71.1	85.4	92.0	76g	70g	5,391	15,015	0
62	Bosnia and Herzegovina	..	..	77.0	71.5	94.4	99.0	..	..	5,568h	8,582h	..
63	Mauritius	53	0.792	75.8	69.0	80.5	88.4	74f	75f	6,948h	17,173h	-1
MEDIUM HUMAN DEVELOPMENT												
64	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	..	..	76.4	71.8	..k	..l	98f,g	91f,g	..h	..h	..
65	Russian Federation	50	0.795	72.0	58.9	99.2e	99.7e	92f	84f	7,735h	12,401h	3
66	Macedonia, TFYR	54	0.791	76.5	71.5	94.1	98.2	71	69	4,286h	8,943h	0
67	Belarus	52	0.793	74.1	62.5	99.4e,m	99.8e,m	90	86	5,510h	8,632h	3
68	Dominica	..	..	..	..	..	..	84	81	..	..	..
69	Brazil	55	0.789	74.8	67.0	88.8	88.4	88g	84g	6,004	10,447	1
70	Colombia	56	0.787	75.6	69.6	92.7	92.9	74	71	5,356	9,202	1
71	Saint Lucia	..	..	74.1	71.0	..	..	80	72	4,308h	8,399h	..
72	Venezuela	60	0.780	76.1	70.2	92.7	93.3	76f,g	73f,g	4,083h	7,982h	-2
73	Albania	59	0.780	76.9	71.1	98.3	99.2	67g	69g	3,487h	6,492h	0
74	Thailand	58	0.781	74.0	66.7	90.5	94.9	74	73	6,036	10,214	2
75	Samoa (Western)	63	0.770	73.9	67.5	..k	..l	76f	72f	3,046h	7,980h	-2
76	Saudi Arabia	72	0.744	74.2	70.3	69.3	87.1	58f	59f	3,486h	22,617h	-10
77	Ukraine	62	0.771	72.4	60.1	99.2e	99.7e	87	83	4,535	8,583	1
78	Lebanon	..	..	74.4	70.1	..	..	85	82	2,786h	9,011h	..
79	Kazakhstan	61	0.772	69.1	58.0	99.3e,m	99.8e,m	93	89	5,799	9,222	3
80	Armenia	65	0.765	74.8	68.1	99.2e	99.7e	77	71	3,222h	5,105h	0
81	China	64	0.765	73.7	70.2	86.5	95.1	70f	71f	4,561h	7,159h	2
82	Peru	67	0.759	72.9	67.8	82.1	93.5	88f	85f	3,294	8,036	0
83	Ecuador	..	..	77.5	71.6	89.7	92.3	..	..	2,796h	5,123h	..
84	Philippines	66	0.761	72.8	68.6	92.7	92.5	84	79	3,449	5,763	2
85	Grenada	..	..	..	..	..	..	75f	71f	..	..	..
86	Jordan	69	0.747	73.2	70.2	84.7	95.1	80	78	2,143	7,038	0
87	Tunisia	73	0.744	75.6	71.4	65.3	83.4	77f	74f	3,421h	12,046h	-3



Table 2: Basic Indicators on Gender – continued

Table 2: Basic Indicators on Gender – continued							Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schools (%)		incomec (PPP US\$)		HDI rank minus GDI rank d
HDI rank	Gender-related development index (GDI)		Life expectancy at birth (years) 2004		Adult literacy rate (% ages 15 and older) 2004		2004		2004		
	Rank	Value	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
88 Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	..	..	74.1	68.5	..	..	67	68	4,300h	8,513h	..
89 Suriname	..	..	72.7	66.1	87.2	92.0	77f,g	68f,g	..h	..h	..
90 Fiji	..	..	70.3	65.9	..	..	76f	74f	3,921h	8,142h	..
91 Paraguay	..	..	73.5	68.9	..	..	70f,g	69f,g	2,789	6,806	..
92 Turkey	71	0.745	71.3	66.6	79.6	95.3	63	75	4,038	11,408	0
93 Sri Lanka	68	0.749	77.0	71.7	89.1	92.3	64f,g	63f,g	2,561	6,158	4
94 Dominican Republic	70	0.745	71.3	64.1	87.2	86.8	78f	70f	4,376h	10,461h	3
95 Belize	..	..	74.4	69.5	..	..	81	81	3,760h	9,674h	..
96 Iran, Islamic Rep. of	74	0.736	72.3	69.2	70.4	83.5	70f	74f	4,122h	10,830h	0
97 Georgia	..	..	74.4	66.6	..	..	76	75	1,561	4,273	..
98 Maldives	..	..	66.6	67.4	96.4	96.2	69f	68f	..h	..h	..
99 Azerbaijan	75	0.733	70.6	63.3	98.2m	99.5m	67	69	3,262h	5,096h	0
100 Occupied Palestinian Territories	..	..	74.2	71.1	88.0	96.7	83f	80f	..	..	..
101 El Salvador	76	0.725	74.1	68.0	..k	..l	69f	70f	3,077	7,074	0
102 Algeria	79	0.713	72.7	70.1	60.1	79.6	73	73	3,259h	9,888h	-2
103 Guyana	..	..	66.7	60.6	..	..	78f,g	78f,g	2,615h	6,375h	..
104 Jamaica	77	0.721	72.5	69.0	85.9m	74.1m	79f	75f	3,027h	5,327h	1
105 Turkmenistan	..	..	66.9	58.4	98.3m	99.3m	..	..	3,425h	5,385h	..
106 Cape Verde	78	0.714	73.5	67.3	..k	..l	67	67	3,045h	8,641h	1
107 Syrian Arab Republic	82	0.702	75.4	71.8	73.6	86.0	60f	65f	1,794h	5,402h	-2
108 Indonesia	81	0.704	69.2	65.3	86.8	94.0	67	70	2,257h	4,963h	0
109 Viet Nam	80	0.708	72.9	68.8	86.9m	93.9m	61f	65f	2,271h	3,220h	2
110 Kyrgyzstan	83	0.701	71.3	62.9	98.1m	99.3m	80	77	1,422h	2,464h	0
111 Egypt	..	..	72.4	68.0	59.4	83.0	..	..	1,588	6,817	..
112 Nicaragua	88	0.684	72.4	67.6	76.6	76.8	71f	69f	1,747h	5,524h	-4
113 Uzbekistan	84	0.694	69.9	63.4	..k	..l	72f	75f	1,398h	2,346h	1
114 Moldova, Rep. of	85	0.692	71.7	64.4	97.7	99.1	73	68	1,349h	2,143h	1
115 Bolivia	86	0.687	66.5	62.3	80.7	93.1	83f	89f	1,983h	3,462h	1
116 Mongolia	87	0.685	66.5	62.5	97.5	98.0	83	72	1,379h	2,730h	1
117 Honduras	89	0.676	70.2	66.1	80.2	79.8	74f	68f	1,771h	3,964h	0
118 Guatemala	90	0.659	71.3	63.9	63.3	75.4	63f	69f	2,130h	6,604h	0
119 Vanuatu	..	..	70.9	67.2	..m	..m	61f	66f	2,468h	3,612h	..
120 Equatorial Guinea	93	0.639	43.3	42.3	80.5	93.4	52f,g	64f,g	11,491h	26,967h	-2
121 South Africa	92	0.646	48.2	45.7	80.9m	84.1m	77g	76g	7,014h	15,521h	0
122 Tajikistan	91	0.648	66.4	61.2	99.2e	99.7e	65	77	876h	1,530h	2
123 Morocco	95	0.615	72.2	67.8	39.6	65.7	54	62	1,742h	6,907h	-1
124 Gabon	..	..	54.7	53.4	..	..	68f,g	72f,g	4,814h	8,449h	..
125 Namibia	94	0.622	47.5	46.8	83.5	86.8	69g	66g	5,416h	9,455h	1
126 India	96	0.591	65.3	62.1	47.8	73.4	58f	66f	1,471h	4,723h	0
127 São Tomé and Príncipe	..	..	64.2	62.1	..	..	63	64	..h	..h	..
128 Solomon Islands	..	..	63.3	61.9	..	.. 45f,g	49f,g	1,202h	2,387h	..	..
129 Cambodia	97	0.578	60.1	52.7	64.1	84.7 55f,g	65f,g	2,077h	2,793h	0	..

Table 2: Basic Indicators on Gender – continued

Table 2: Basic Indicators on Gender – continued							Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schools (%)		incomec (PPP US\$)		HDI rank minus GDI rank d
HDI rank	Gender-related development index (GDI)		Life expectancy at birth (years)		Adult literacy rate (% ages 15 and older)						
	Rank	Value	2004		2004		2004		2004		
			Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
130 Myanmar	..	..	63.5	57.8	86.4	93.9	50f	48f	..	..	..
131 Botswana	98	0.555	34.8	34.9	81.8	80.4	72f	69f	5,322	14,738	0
132 Comoros	99	0.550	65.8	61.5	..k	..l	42f	50f	1,306h	2,576h	0
133 Lao People's Dem. Rep.	100	0.545	56.3	53.8	60.9	77.0	55	66	1,328h	2,579h	0
134 Pakistan	105	0.513	63.6	63.2	36.0	63.0	32	44	977h	3,403h	-4
135 Bhutan	..	..	64.6	62.2	..	..	..	..	..h	..h	..
136 Ghana	101	0.528	57.4	56.5	49.8	66.4	44f	50f	1,860h	2,611h	1
137 Bangladesh	102	0.524	64.2	62.5	..k	..l	58g	56g	1,170h	2,540h	1
138 Nepal	106	0.513	62.4	61.6	34.9	62.7	52g	62g	995h	1,993h	-2
139 Papua New Guinea	103	0.521	56.3	55.2	50.9	63.4	38f,g	43f,g	2,127h	2,934h	2
140 Congo	104	0.519	53.5	51.0	..k	..l	49f	55f	652h	1,310h	2
141 Sudan	110	0.492	58.0	55.1	51.8n	71.1n	34f	39f	778h	3,105h	-3
142 Timor-Leste	..	..	57.1	54.9	..	..	..	..	..h	..h	..
143 Madagascar	107	0.507	56.9	54.3	65.3	76.5	55f	58f	704h	1,012h	1
144 Cameroon	109	0.497	46.2	45.1	59.8	77.0	56f	69f	1,435h	2,921h	0
145 Uganda	108	0.498	48.8	47.9	57.7	76.8	65	67	1,216h	1,741h	2
146 Swaziland	114	0.479	31.3	31.3	78.3	80.9	57f,g	59f,g	2,576	8,936	-3
LOW HUMAN DEVELOPMENT											
147 Togo	116	0.476	56.4	52.6	38.5	68.7	46f	64f	927h	2,159h	-4
148 Djibouti	..	..	54.1	51.8	..	..	21	27	1,305h	2,681h	..
149 Lesotho	112	0.486	36.2	34.0	90.3	73.7	66f	65f	1,848h	3,506h	1
150 Yemen	117	0.462	62.4	59.7	..k	..l	42f	68f	397h	1,346h	-3
151 Zimbabwe	113	0.483	36.0	37.2	86.3k	93.8l	51f,g	54f,g	1,527h	2,613h	2
152 Kenya	111	0.487	46.5	48.5	70.2	77.7	58f	62f	1,037	1,242	5
153 Mauritania	115	0.478	54.7	51.5	43.4	59.5	44	47	1,295h	2,601h	2
154 Haiti	..	..	52.7	51.3	..k	..l	..	..	1,283h	2,465h	..
155 Gambia	..	..	57.5	54.7	..	..	50f	51f	1,378h	2,615h	..
156 Senegal	118	0.451	57.2	54.8	29.2	51.1	36f	41f	1,200h	2,243h	0
157 Eritrea	..	..	56.1	52.3	..	..	29	41	557	1,414	..
158 Rwanda	119	0.449	45.8	42.6	59.8	71.4	52	52	1,083h	1,454h	0
159 Nigeria	120	0.443	43.5	43.2	..k	..l	50f	60f	669h	1,628h	0
160 Guinea	121	0.434	54.2	53.6	18.1	42.6	35	49	1,764h	2,576h	0
161 Angola	122	0.431	42.5	39.6	54.2	82.9	24f,g	28f,g	1,670h	2,706h	0
162 Tanzania, U. Rep. of	123	0.426	46.2	45.6	62.2	77.5	47f	49f	569h	781h	0
163 Benin	124	0.412	55.0	53.5	23.3	47.9	41f	58f	702h	1,475h	0
164 Côte d'Ivoire	125	0.401	46.7	45.2	38.6	60.8	32f,g	47f,g	749h	2,324h	0
165 Zambia	126	0.396	37.1	38.2	59.8m	76.3m	52f	56f	670h	1,216h	0
166 Malawi	127	0.394	39.6	40.0	54.0m	74.9m	64f	65f	547h	747h	0
167 Congo, Dem. Rep. of the	130	0.378	44.5	42.5	54.1	80.9	24f,g	30f,g	482h	931h	-2
168 Mozambique	128	0.387	42.3	41.0	..k	..l	44	53	1,110h	1,372h	1
169 Burundi	129	0.380	44.9	43.0	52.2	67.3	32	40	594h	765h	1
170 Ethiopia	..	..	48.8	46.8	..k	..l	30	42	570h	944h	..
171 Chad	131	0.350	44.7	42.6	12.8	40.8	25f	44f	1,644h	2,545h	0
172 Central African Republic	132	0.336	39.8	38.4	33.5	64.8	23f,g	36f,g	836h	1,367h	0

Table 2: Basic Indicators on Gender – continued

Table 2: Basic Indicators on Gender – continued							Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schools (%)		incomec (PPP US\$)		HDI rank minus GDI rank d
HDI rank	Gender-related development index (GDI)		Life expectancy at birth (years)		Adult literacy rate (% ages 15 and older)						
	Rank	Value	2004		2004		2004		2004		
			Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
173 Guinea-Bissau	..	..	46.2	43.4	..	..	29f,g	45f,g	487h	963h	..
174 Burkina Faso	133	0.335	48.6	47.2	15.2	29.4	23f	30f	930h	1,405h	0
175 Mali	134	0.329	48.7	47.4	11.9m	26.7m	30f	40f	800h	1,197h	0
176 Sierra Leone	135	0.317	42.4	39.6	24.4	46.9	55f	75f	353h	775h	0
177 Niger	136	0.292	44.7	44.6	15.1	42.9	18	25	560h	989h	0

1. UNDP, Human Development Report 2006, 2006. Reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan.

- a. Data refer to national literacy estimates from censuses or surveys conducted between 2000 and 2005, unless otherwise specified. Due to differences in methodology and timeliness of underlying data, comparisons across countries and over time should be made with caution. For more details, see <http://www.uis.unesco.org/>.
- b. In 2006 UNESCO Institute for Statistics changed its convention for citing the reference year of education data to the calendar year in which academic or financial year ends --from 2003/04, for example, to 2004. Data for some countries may refer to national or UNESCO Institute for Statistics estimates. For details, see [www.uis.unesco.org](http://www.uis.unesco.org). Because data are from different sources, comparisons across countries should be made with caution.
- c. Because of the lack of gender-disaggregated income data, female and male earned income are crudely estimated on the basis of data on the ratio of the female nonagricultural wage to the male nonagricultural wage, the female and male shares of the economically active population, the total female and male population and GDP per capita in purchasing power parity terms in US dollars (see the technical note 1). Estimates are based on data for the most recent year available during 1991-2004, unless otherwise specified.
- d. The HDI ranks used in this calculation are recalculated for the 136 countries with a GDI value. A positive figure indicates that the GDI rank is higher than the HDI rank, a negative the opposite.
- e. For the purposes of calculating the GDI, a value of 99.0 % was applied.
- f. Preliminary UNESCO Institute for Statistics estimate, subject to further revision.
- g. Data refer to a year other than that specified.
- h. No wage data are available. For the purposes of calculating the estimated

- female and male earned income, a value of 0.75 was used for the ratio of the female nonagricultural wage to the male nonagricultural wage.
- i. Statec. 2006. Correspondence on gross enrolment ratio for Luxembourg. May. Luxembourg.
- j. For the purposes of calculating the GDI, a value of \$40,000 (PPP US\$) was applied.
- k. In the absence of recent data, estimates from UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Institute for Statistics. 2005. Correspondence on adult and youth literacy rates. March. Montreal. , based on outdated census or survey information, were used and should be interpreted with caution: Bangladesh 33.1, Cape Verde 70.8, Comoros 49.7, Congo 80.8, El Salvador 78.8, Mozambique 35.6, Nigeria 64.2, Samoa (Western) 98.4, Trinidad and Tobago 98.3, United Arab Emirates 82.7, Uruguay 98.4, Uzbekistan 99.1, Yemen 33.4 and Zimbabwe 86.3.
- l. In the absence of recent data, estimates from UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Institute for Statistics. 2005. Correspondence on adult and youth literacy rates. March. Montreal. , based on outdated census or survey information were used, and should be interpreted with caution: Bangladesh 51.7, Cape Verde 86.6, Comoros 63.9, Congo 91.2, El Salvador 83.6, Mozambique 65.7, Nigeria 96.9, Samoa (Western) 98.9, Trinidad and Tobago 99.2, United Arab Emirates 76.8, Uruguay 97.5, Uzbekistan 99.6, Yemen 72.5, Zimbabwe 93.8.
- m. Data refer to the most recent year available during 1995-99.
- n. Data refer to a year or period other than that specified, differ from the standard definition or refer to only part of a country.

Gender Development Index ranks for 136 countries

1 Norway	35 Lithuania	69 Jordan	103 Papua New Guinea
2 Iceland	36 Slovakia	70 Dominican Republic	104 Congo
3 Australia	37 Chile	71 Turkey	105 Pakistan
4 Ireland	38 Bahrain	72 Saudi Arabia	106 Nepal
5 Sweden	39 Uruguay	73 Tunisia	107 Madagascar
6 Luxembourg	40 Croatia	74 Iran, Islamic Rep. of	108 Uganda
7 Canada	41 Latvia	75 Azerbaijan	109 Cameroon
8 United States	42 Costa Rica	76 El Salvador	110 Sudan
9 Netherlands	43 United Arab Emirates	77 Jamaica	111 Kenya
10 Switzerland	44 Bulgaria	78 Cape Verde	112 Lesotho
11 Finland	45 Mexico	79 Algeria	113 Zimbabwe
12 Belgium	46 Tonga	80 Viet Nam	114 Swaziland
13 Japan	47 Panama	81 Indonesia	115 Mauritania
14 France	48 Trinidad and Tobago	82 Syrian Arab Republic	116 Togo
15 Denmark	49 Romania	83 Kyrgyzstan	117 Yemen
16 United Kingdom	50 Russian Federation	84 Uzbekistan	118 Senegal
17 Austria	51 Malaysia	85 Moldova, Rep. of	119 Rwanda
18 Italy	52 Belarus	86 Bolivia	120 Nigeria
19 Spain	53 Mauritius	87 Mongolia	121 Guinea
20 New Zealand	54 Macedonia, TFYR	88 Nicaragua	122 Angola
21 Germany	55 Brazil	89 Honduras	123 Tanzania, U. Rep. of
22 Israel	56 Colombia	90 Guatemala	124 Benin
23 Greece	57 Oman	91 Tajikistan	125 Côte d'Ivoire
24 Slovenia	58 Thailand	92 South Africa	126 Zambia
25 Korea, Rep. of	59 Albania	93 Equatorial Guinea	127 Malawi
26 Portugal	60 Venezuela	94 Namibia	128 Mozambique
27 Cyprus	61 Kazakhstan	95 Morocco	129 Burundi
28 Czech Republic	62 Ukraine	96 India	130 Congo, Dem. Rep. of the
29 Malta	63 Samoa (Western)	97 Cambodia	131 Chad
30 Hungary	64 China	98 Botswana	132 Central African Republic
31 Kuwait	65 Armenia	99 Comoros	133 Burkina Faso
32 Argentina	66 Philippines	100 Lao People's Dem. Rep.	134 Mali
33 Poland	67 Peru	101 Ghana	135 Sierra Leone
34 Estonia	68 Sri Lanka	102 Bangladesh	136 Niger



Table 3: Basic Indicators on Girls' Education<sup>1</sup>

HDI rank	Adult literacy <sup>a</sup>		Youth literacy <sup>a</sup>		Net primary enrolment <sup>b,c</sup>		Net secondary enrolment <sup>b,c</sup>		Gross tertiary enrolment <sup>c,d</sup>	
	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f
	Female rate	Female rate	Female rate	Female rate	Female	Ratio of	Female	Ratio of	Female	Ratio of
	(% ages 15 and older)	as % of male rate	(% ages 15-24)	female to male rate	ratio (%)	female to male	ratio (%)	female to male	ratio (%)	female to male
	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f
HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT										
1 Norway	..	..	..	..	99	1.00	97	1.01	98	1.54
2 Iceland	..	..	..	..	98g	0.98g	88g	1.04g	79g	1.78g
3 Australia	..	..	..	..	96	1.01	86g	1.01g	80	1.23
4 Ireland	..	..	..	..	96	1.00	89	1.06	66	1.28
5 Sweden	..	..	..	..	99	1.00	100	1.03	102	1.55
6 Canada	..	..	..	..	100g,h	1.00g,h	94i	0.99i	70j	1.36j
7 Japan	..	..	..	..	100	1.00	100g,k	1.01g,k	51	0.89
8 United States	..	..	..	..	91	0.96	91	1.02	96	1.39
9 Switzerland	..	..	..	..	94	1.00	80	0.93	42	0.80
10 Netherlands	..	..	..	..	98	0.99	90	1.01	62	1.08
11 Finland	..	..	..	..	99	1.00	94	1.01	98	1.20
12 Luxembourg	..	..	..	..	91	1.00	82	1.07	13g	1.18g
13 Belgium	..	..	..	..	99	1.00	97g,l	1.01g,l	69	1.21
14 Austria	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	54	1.19
15 Denmark	..	..	..	..	100	1.00	94	1.03	87	1.42
16 France	..	..	..	..	99	1.00	97	1.02	63	1.28
17 Italy	98.0	99	99.8	100	99	1.00	93	1.02	72	1.34
18 United Kingdom	..	..	..	..	99	1.00	97	1.03	70	1.37
19 Spain	..	..	..	..	99	0.99	99	1.04	72	1.22
20 New Zealand	..	..	..	..	99	1.00	96	1.03	74	1.41
21 Germany	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
22 Hong Kong China (SAR)	..	..	..	..	90m	0.95m	77m	0.97m	32	0.97
23 Israel	95.9	97	99.6	100	98	1.01	89	1.00	65	1.33
24 Greece	94.2	96	99.0	100	99	0.99	88	1.04	86	1.17
25 Singapore	88.6	92	99.6	100	..	..	..	..	..	..
26 Korea, Rep. of	..	..	..	..	99	0.99	88	1.00	67	0.61
27 Slovenia	..	..	..	..	98	1.00	95	1.00	86	1.38
28 Portugal	..	..	..	..	99	0.99	87l	1.11l	65	1.32
29 Cyprus	95.1	96	99.8	100	96m	1.00m	95m	1.03m	36m	0.98m
30 Czech Republic	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	45	1.10
31 Barbados	..	..	..	..	97	0.99	98	1.05	54h	2.47h
32 Malta	89.2n	103n	97.8n	104n	94	1.00	90	1.06	30	1.33
33 Kuwait	91.0	96	99.8	100	87g	1.03g	80g,j	1.05g,j	33g	2.72g
34 Brunei Darussalam	90.2	95	98.9	100	..	..	..	..	17g	1.74g
35 Hungary	..	..	..	..	88	0.99	90g	0.99g	70	1.40
36 Argentina	97.2	100	99.1	100	98l	0.99l	82l	1.07l	77l	1.51l
37 Poland	..	..	..	..	98	1.00	92	1.03	72	1.41
38 Chile	95.6	100	99.2	100	..	..	..	..	42	0.95
39 Bahrain	83.6	94	97.3	100	97	1.01	93	1.07	45g	1.84g
40 Estonia	99.8	100	99.8	100	94	1.00	91	1.03	82	1.68
41 Lithuania	99.6	100	99.7	100	89	1.00	93	1.01	89	1.55
42 Slovakia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	40	1.22
43 Uruguay	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	53g,l	2.04g,l

Table 3: Basic Indicators on Girls' Education – continued

HDI rank	Adult literacy <sup>a</sup>		Youth literacy <sup>a</sup>		Net primary enrolment <sup>b,c</sup>		Net secondary enrolment <sup>b,c</sup>		Gross tertiary enrolment <sup>c,d</sup>	
	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f
	Female rate	Female rate	Female rate	Female rate	Female	Ratio of	Female	Ratio of	Female	Ratio of
	(% ages 15 and older)	as % of male rate	(% ages 15-24)	female to male rate	ratio (%)	female to male	ratio (%)	female to male	ratio (%)	female to male
	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f
44 Croatia	97.1	98	99.7	100	87l	0.99l	86l	1.02l	42l	1.19l
45 Latvia	99.7	100	99.8	100	..	..	..	..	94	1.72
46 Qatar	88.6	99	97.5	103	94	0.99	86	0.98	34	3.67
47 Seychelles	92.3	101	99.4	101	97m	1.01m	96m	1.07m	..	..
48 Costa Rica	95.1	100	98.0	101	..	..	..	..	28	1.26
49 United Arab Emirates	..	..	..	..	70	0.97	64	1.06	40g,l	3.24g,l
50 Cuba	99.8	100	100.0	100	95	0.97	87	1.02	38l	1.34l
51 Saint Kitts and Nevis	..	..	..	..	98m	1.08m	97m	0.97m	..	..
52 Bahamas	..	..	..	..	85	1.02	78	1.12	..	..
53 Mexico	89.6	97	97.6	100	98	1.00	65	1.03	23	0.98
54 Bulgaria	97.7	99	98.1	100	95	0.99	87	0.98	44	1.16
55 Tonga	99.0n	100n	99.4n	100n	89i	0.97i	75g	1.23g	8g	1.67g
56 Oman	73.5	85	96.7	99	79	1.02	75	1.01	15	1.38
57 Trinidad and Tobago	..	..	..	..	92m	0.99m	74g	1.06g	13	1.27
58 Panama	91.2	99	95.6	99	98	0.99	67	1.10	57	1.59
59 Antigua and Barbuda	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
60 Romania	96.3	98	97.8	100	92	0.99	82	1.03	45	1.26
61 Malaysia	85.4	93	97.3	100	93l	1.00l	81l	1.14l	38l	1.41l
62 Bosnia and Herzegovina	94.4	95	99.8	100	..	..	..	..	..	..
63 Mauritius	80.5	91	95.4	102	96	1.02	80g	1.00g	20	1.39
MEDIUM HUMAN DEVELOPMENT										
64 Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	59g,l	1.09g,l
65 Russian Federation	99.2	100	99.8	100	92g	1.01g	..	..	79g	1.36g
66 Macedonia, TFYR	94.1	96	98.5	99	92	1.00	80g,j	0.97g,j	33	1.39
67 Belarus	99.4n	100n	99.8n	100n	88g	0.97g	88g	1.01g	71	1.39
68 Dominica	..	..	..	..	88m	1.01m	92g	1.03g	..	..
69 Brazil	88.8	100	97.9	102	..	..	78l	1.07l	25l	1.32l
70 Colombia	92.7	100	98.4	101	84	1.01	58g	1.11g	28	1.09
71 Saint Lucia	..	..	..	..	96	0.97	74g	1.09g	22	3.43
72 Venezuela	92.7	99	98.1	102	92	1.01	66	1.15	41g,l	1.07g,l
73 Albania	98.3	99	99.5	100	95l	0.99l	73l	0.98l	20l	1.57l
74 Thailand	90.5	95	97.8	100	..	..	..	..	44	1.17
75 Samoa (Western)	..	..	..	..	91g	1.00g	70g	1.14g	7g,h	0.94g,h
76 Saudi Arabia	69.3	80	93.7	96	57j	0.92j	51g	0.96g	33	1.50
77 Ukraine	99.2	99	99.8	100	82m	1.00m	84m	1.00m	71m	1.19m
78 Lebanon	..	..	..	..	93	0.99	..	..	50	1.12
79 Kazakhstan	99.3n	100n	99.9n	100n	92	0.99	92	0.99	56	1.38
80 Armenia	99.2	99	99.9	100	96	1.04	90	1.03	29	1.21
81 China	86.5	91	98.5	99	..	..	..	..	17g	0.84g
82 Peru	82.1	88	95.7	98	97	1.00	69	1.00	34g	1.03g
83 Ecuador	89.7	97	96.5	100	98g	1.01g	53	1.01	..	..
84 Philippines	92.7	100	95.7	101	95	1.02	67	1.20	32	1.28
85 Grenada	..	..	..	..	84m	0.99m	82g	1.10g	..	..
86 Jordan	84.7	89	98.9	100	92	1.02	82	1.02	41	1.10
87 Tunisia	65.3	78	92.2	96	98	1.00	69g,j	1.04g,j	33	1.36

Table 3: Basic Indicators on Girls' Education – continued

HDI rank	Adult literacy <sup>a</sup>		Youth literacy <sup>a</sup>		Net primary enrolment <sup>b,c</sup>		Net secondary enrolment <sup>b,c</sup>		Gross tertiary enrolment <sup>c,d</sup>	
	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f
	Female rate	Female rate	Female rate	Female rate	Female	Ratio of	Female	Ratio of	Female	Ratio of
	(% ages 15 and older)	as % of male rate	(% ages 15-24)	female to male rate	ratio (%)	female to male	ratio (%)	female to male	ratio (%)	female to male
	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f
88 Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	..	..	..	..	93g	0.97g	63	1.02	..	..
89 Suriname	87.2	95	94.1	98	96g,l	1.07g,l	74g,l	1.38g,l	15j	1.62j
90 Fiji	..	..	..	..	96	0.99	85g	1.06g	17	1.20
91 Paraguay	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	28g,l	1.37g,l
92 Turkey	79.6	84	93.3	95	87g	0.95g	..	..	24	0.73
93 Sri Lanka	89.1	97	96.1	101	98g,l	1.00g,l	..	..	..	..
94 Dominican Republic	87.2	100	95.4	103	87	1.02	54g	1.21g	41g	1.64g
95 Belize	..	..	..	..	96	1.01	73g	1.05g	4	2.47
96 Iran, Islamic Rep. of	70.4	84	..	..	88	0.99	76	0.94	24	1.10
97 Georgia	..	..	..	..	93	0.99	81	1.00	42	1.03
98 Maldives	96.4	100	98.3	100	90j	1.01j	55g,j	1.15g,j	(.)g	3.00g
99 Azerbaijan	98.2n	99n	99.9n	100n	83	0.98	76	0.98	14	0.87
100 Occupied Palestinian Territories	88.0	91	98.8	100	86	1.00	92	1.05	39	1.03
101 El Salvador	..	..	..	..	93g	1.00g	49g,l	1.03g,l	20	1.22
102 Algeria	60.1	76	86.1	92	95	0.98	68g	1.05g	20	1.09
103 Guyana	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12	1.94
104 Jamaica	85.9n	116n	..	..	91	1.01	81	1.03	26g,l	2.29g,l
105 Turkmenistan	98.3n	99n	99.8n	100n	..	..	..	..	..	..
106 Cape Verde	..	..	..	..	91	0.99	58	1.12	6	1.09
107 Syrian Arab Republic	73.6	86	90.2	96	92j	0.95j	56	0.93	..	..
108 Indonesia	86.8	92	98.5	100	93	0.98	57	0.99	15	0.79
109 Viet Nam	86.9n	93n	93.6n	99n	92g,h	0.94g,h	..	..	9g	0.77g
110 Kyrgyzstan	98.1n	99n	99.7n	100n	90	0.99	..	..	43	1.19
111 Egypt	59.4	71	78.9	88	94g	0.97g	77g,j	0.94g,j	..	..
112 Nicaragua	76.6	100	88.8	106	87	0.99	43	1.13	19g,l	1.11g,l
113 Uzbekistan	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14g	0.79g
114 Moldova, Rep. of	97.7	99	99.5	100	86m	0.99m	79m	1.04m	43m	1.36m
115 Bolivia	80.7	87	96.1	98	96g	1.01g	73g	0.99g	..	..
116 Mongolia	97.5	100	98.4	101	85	1.01	88	1.14	49	1.64
117 Honduras	80.2	101	90.9	105	92	1.02	..	..	20g	1.46g
118 Guatemala	63.3	84	78.4	91	91	0.95	32g	0.92g	8g,l	0.72g,l
119 Vanuatu	..n	..n	..n	..n	93	0.98	36g	0.86g	4g	0.57g
120 Equatorial Guinea	80.5	86	94.9	100	78j	0.85j	18g,h	0.59g,h	2k	0.43k
121 South Africa	80.9n	96n	94.3n	101n	89l	1.01l	65g,k	1.12g,k	17l	1.17l
122 Tajikistan	99.2	100	99.8	100	95	0.96	73	0.85	8	0.33
123 Morocco	39.6	60	60.5	75	83	0.94	32g,l	0.86g,l	10	0.87
124 Gabon	..	..	..	..	77g,h	0.99g,h	..	..	5i	0.53i
125 Namibia	83.5	96	93.5	103	77l	1.08l	43l	1.35l	7l	1.14l
126 India	47.8	65	67.7	80	87g	0.94g	..	..	9	0.66
127 São Tomé and Príncipe	..	..	..	..	98	0.99	27	1.08	..	..
128 Solomon Islands	..	..	..	..	79	0.99	24g,l	0.86g,l	..	..
129 Cambodia	64.1	76	78.9	90	96	0.96	22g	0.73g	2	0.45
130 Myanmar	86.4	92	93.4	98	87	1.01	36	0.95	15g,h	1.77g,h
131 Botswana	81.8	102	95.6	104	83g	1.03g	64g	1.11g	6	0.85
132 Comoros	..	..	..	..	51k,m	0.85k,m	..	..	2g	0.77g



Table 3: Basic Indicators on Girls' Education – continued

HDI rank	Adult literacy <sup>a</sup>		Youth literacy <sup>a</sup>		Net primary enrolment <sup>b,c</sup>		Net secondary enrolment <sup>b,c</sup>		Gross tertiary enrolment <sup>c,d</sup>	
	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f
	Female rate	Female rate	Female rate	Female rate	Female	Ratio of	Female	Ratio of	Female	Ratio of
	(% ages 15 and older)	as % of male rate	(% ages 15-24)	female to male rate	ratio (%)	female to male	ratio (%)	female to male	ratio (%)	female to male
	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f
133 Lao People's Dem. Rep.	60.9	79	74.7	90	82	0.94	34	0.85	5	0.63
134 Pakistan	36.0	57	54.7	72	56m	0.73m	..	..	3	0.80
135 Bhutan	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
136 Ghana	49.8	75	65.5	86	58g	1.01g	33g	0.86g	2	0.48
137 Bangladesh	..	..	..	..	95m	1.03m	51l	1.11l	4l	0.50l
138 Nepal	34.9	56	60.1	75	73l,m	0.87l,m	..	..	3	0.41
139 Papua New Guinea	50.9	80	64.1	93	..	..	..	..	2g,i	0.56g,i
140 Congo	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1g,l	0.18g,l
141 Sudan	51.8	73	71.4	84	39g,k	0.83g,k	..	..	6g,k	0.92g,k
142 Timor-Leste	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12j,m	1.48j,m
143 Madagascar	65.3	85	68.2	94	89	1.00	11g,i	1.03g,i	2	0.89
144 Cameroon	59.8	78	..	..	..	..	..	..	4g	0.63g
145 Uganda	57.7	75	71.2	86	..	..	14	0.90	3	0.62
146 Swaziland	78.3	97	89.8	103	77l	1.01l	32l	1.24l	5	1.08
Low human development										
147 Togo	38.5	56	63.6	76	72	0.85	14g,k	0.48g,k	1g,h	0.20g,h
148 Djibouti	..	..	..	..	29	0.80	15g	0.70g	1	0.82
149 Lesotho	90.3	123	..	..	89	1.06	28	1.54	3l	1.50l
150 Yemen	..	..	..	..	63g	0.73g	21g,k	0.46g,k	5	0.38
151 Zimbabwe	..	..	..	..	82l	1.01l	33l	0.93l	3l	0.62l
152 Kenya	70.2	90	80.7	101	77	1.00	40g	1.01g	2	0.61
153 Mauritania	43.4	73	55.5	82	74	0.99	13g	0.82g	2	0.30
154 Haiti	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
155 Gambia	..	..	..	..	77g	1.06g	41g	0.83g	1	0.26
156 Senegal	29.2	57	41.0	70	65	0.95	13	0.72	..	..
157 Eritrea	..	..	..	..	44	0.85	18	0.63	(.)	0.15
158 Rwanda	59.8	84	76.9	98	75	1.05	..	..	2	0.62
159 Nigeria	..	..	..	..	57g	0.89g	25g	0.83g	7	0.55
160 Guinea	18.1	43	33.7	57	58	0.84	14g	0.51g	1	0.19
161 Angola	54.2	65	63.2	75	..	..	..	..	1g,l	0.70g,l
162 Tanzania, U. Rep. of	62.2	80	76.2	94	85	0.98	..	..	1	0.41
163 Benin	23.3	49	33.2	56	72	0.78	11g,h	0.49g,h	1g,h	0.25g,h
164 Côte d'Ivoire	38.6	63	52.1	74	50l,m	0.80l,m	15g,j	0.57g,j	3i	0.36i
165 Zambia	59.8n	78n	66.2n	91n	80	1.00	21g	0.78g	2g,k	0.47g,k
166 Malawi	54.0n	72n	70.7n	86n	98	1.05	23	0.86	(.)	0.60
167 Congo, Dem. Rep. of the	54.1	67	63.1	81	..	..	..	..	..	..
168 Mozambique	..	..	..	..	67	0.90	4	0.78	1	0.44
169 Burundi	52.2	78	70.4	92	54	0.89	..	..	1	0.38
170 Ethiopia	..	..	..	..	44	0.89	19g	0.61g	1	0.35
171 Chad	12.8	31	23.2	42	46g,l	0.68g,l	5g,l	0.33g,l	(.)g,h	0.14g,h
172 Central African Republic	33.5	52	46.9	67	..	..	..	..	1k	0.19k
173 Guinea-Bissau	..	..	..	..	38g,h	0.71g,h	6g,h	0.55g,h	(.)g,h	0.17g,h
174 Burkina Faso	15.2	52	24.8	65	35	0.77	8g	0.68g	1g	0.31g
175 Mali	11.9n	44n	16.9n	52n	43	0.85	..	..	1	0.46
176 Sierra Leone	24.4	52	37.2	63	..	..	..	..	1g,j	0.39g,j

Table 3: Basic Indicators on Girls' Education – continued

HDI rank	Adult literacy <sup>a</sup>		Youth literacy <sup>a</sup>		Net primary enrolment <sup>b,c</sup>		Net secondary enrolment <sup>b,c</sup>		Gross tertiary enrolment <sup>c,d</sup>	
	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f
	Female rate	Female rate	Female rate	Female rate	Female	Ratio of	Female	Ratio of	Female	Ratio of
	(% ages 15 and older)	as % of male rate	(% ages 15-24)	female to male rate	ratio (%)	female to male	ratio (%)	female to male	ratio (%)	female to male
	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f	2004f
177 Niger	15.1	35	23.2	44	32	0.71	5	0.67	(.)	0.36
Developing countries	71.7	84	83.0	92	..	..	..	..	..	..
Least developed countries	50.	72	61.6	82	..	..	..	..	..	..
Arab States	59.7	74	80.4	89	..	..	..	..	..	..
East Asia and the Pacific	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Latin America and the Caribbean	89.5	98	97.1	101	..	..	..	..	..	..
South Asia	47.7	66	65.3	79	..	..	..	..	..	..
Sub-Saharan Africa	53.2	76	64.0	86	..	..	..	..	..	..
Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS	98.7	99	99.6	100	..	..	..	..	..	..
OECD	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
High-income OECD	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
High human development	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Medium human development	74.4	86	85.6	93	..	..	..	..	..	..
Low human development	46.1	70	57.5	82	..	..	..	..	..	..
High income	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Middle income	86.4	93	96.2	99	..	..	..	..	..	..
Low income	50.2	69	66.6	82	..	..	..	..	..	..
World	74.4	86	84.2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

1. UNDP, Human Development Report 2006, 2006. Reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan.

- a. Data refer to national literacy estimates from censuses or surveys conducted between 2000 and 2005, unless otherwise specified. Due to differences in methodology and timeliness of underlying data, comparisons across countries and over time should be made with caution. For more details, see <http://www.uis.unesco.org/>.
- b. The net enrolment ratio is the ratio of enrolled children of the official age for the education level indicated to the total population at that age. Net enrolment ratios exceeding 100% reflect discrepancies between these two data sets.
- c. Data for some countries may refer to national or UNESCO Institute for Statistics estimates. For details, see [www.uis.unesco.org/](http://www.uis.unesco.org/). Because data are from different sources, comparisons across countries should be made with caution.
- d. Tertiary enrolment is generally calculated as a gross ratio. e. Calculated as the ratio of the female enrolment ratio to the male enrolment ratio.f. In 2006 the UNESCO Institute for Statistics changed its convention for citing the reference year of education data to the calendar year in which the academic or financial year ends --from 2003/04, for example, to 2004.
- g. Preliminary UNESCO Institute for Statistics estimate, subject to further revision.
- h. Data refer to the 2001 school year.
- i. Data refer to the 1999 school year.
- j. Data refer to the 2002 school year.
- k. Data refer to the 2000 school year.
- l. Data refer to the 2003 school year.
- m. National estimate.
- n. Data refer to a year between 1995 and 1999.

Table 4: Reproductive Health of Young Women

	MARRIAGE AND FERTILITY <sup>1</sup>						USE OF HEALTH SERVICES <sup>1</sup>				ESTIMATED NO. OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV <sup>2</sup>			
	% Ever Married		% Women	% Women	Lifetime	% Births to	% Single Sexually		% Married Women		Young Women (15 to 24)		Young Men (15 to 24)	
	Ages		Giving	Ages 15	Births per	Women <Age 20	Active Women		Using Modern		Rate (%) 2005		Rate (%) 2005	
	15 to 19	Male	Birth by	to 19 Giving	Woman	Attended by	Using Modern Contraception		Contraception		Estimate	[low estimate -	Estimate	[low estimate -
	Female		Age 18	Birth in 1 Yr	(TFR)	Skilled Personnel	Age 15 to 19	20 to 24	15 to 19	20 to 24		high estimate]		high estimate]
WORLD	14	3	—	6	2.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
MORE DEVELOPED	3	—	—	2	1.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
LESS DEVELOPED	17	3	—	7	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
LESS DEVELOPED (Excl. China)	23	4	22	9	3.4	—	—	—	17	31	—	—	—	—
AFRICA	23	2	23	11	5.1	44	—	—	14	23	—	—	—	—
Sub-Saharan Africa	27	3	28	13	5.6	40	35	25	12	18	4.3	[3.7 - 5.1]	1.5	[1.3 - 1.7]
NORTHERN AFRICA	8	—	6	4	3.3	—	—	—	27	43	—	—	—	—
Algeria	2	—	1	1	2.4	94	—	—	24	38	—	—	—	—
Egypt	10	2	8	5	3.1	69	—	—	24	41	—	—	—	—
Libya	1	0	—	1	3.5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Morocco	11	1	8	4	2.5	66	—	—	36	53	—	—	—	—
Sudan	11	2	—	6	5.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tunisia	1	0	1	1	2.1	100	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
WESTERN AFRICA	33	2	29	13	5.9	36	28	45	4	8	—	—	—	—
Benin	24	1	24	11	5.9	72	16	{18}	3	7	1.1	[0.6 - 1.8]	0.4	[0.2 - 0.6]
Burkina Faso	32	1	27	12	6.2	55	47	{71}	4	9	1.4	[0.8 - 2.0]	0.5	[0.3 - 0.6]
Cape Verde	9	2	24	10	4	77	47	67	31	48	—	—	—	—
Côte d'Ivoire	25	2	35	13	5.2	50	25	31	4	7	5.1	[2.6 - 7.9]	1.7	[0.9 - 2.7]
Gambia	39	2	—	13	5.5	—	—	—	—	—	1.7	[0.7 - 2.9]	0.6	[0.2 - 1.0]
Ghana	14	1	15	7	4.4	48	{36}	{30}	7	17	1.3	[1.1 - 1.5]	0.2	[0.2 - 0.3]
Guinea	46	2	47	16	5.7	45	{20}	{43}	5	6	1.4	[1.1 - 1.6]	0.5	[0.4 - 0.5]
Guinea-Bissau	—	—	—	20	7.1	—	—	—	—	—	2.5	[1.1 - 4.3]	0.9	[0.4 - 1.5]
Liberia	—	—	—	23	6.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mali	49	5	45	19	7.1	44	17	{26}	4	7	1.2	[0.9 - 1.5]	0.4	[0.3 - 0.5]
Mauritania	28	1	25	8	5.9	54	—	—	3	4	0.5	[0.2 - 1.0]	0.2	[0.1 - 0.3]
Niger	62	4	47	27	8	17	—	—	2	5	0.8	[0.3 - 1.4]	0.2	[0.1 - 0.4]
Nigeria	33	1	28	13	5.9	26	27	51	4	7	2.7	[1.3 - 4.4]	0.9	[0.4 - 1.5]
Senegal	28	—	27	9	5.1	51	{33}	{53}	2	4	0.6	[0.2 - 1.1]	0.2	[0.1 - 0.4]
Sierra Leone	47	6	—	19	6.5	—	—	—	—	—	1.1	[0.6 - 1.7]	0.4	[0.2 - 0.6]
Togo	20	2	19	10	5.4	56	25	24	4	6	2.2	[1.0 - 3.6]	0.8	[0.4 - 1.2]
EASTERN AFRICA	27	3	28	12	5.6	38	35	40	12	20	—	—	—	—
Burundi	7	1	—	5	6.8	—	—	—	—	—	2.3	[2.0 - 2.7]	0.8	[0.7 - 0.9]
Comoros	12	3	17	6	5.4	55	{31}	{25}	{5}	9	<0.1	[<0.2]	<0.1	[<0.2]
Djibouti	5	—	4	3	4.2	85	—	—	6	9	2.1	[0.5 - 4.6]	0.7	[0.2 - 1.6]
Eritrea	31	2	25	8	5.4	30	—	—	—	—	1.6	[0.7 - 2.7]	0.6	[0.3 - 1.0]
Ethiopia	30	3	24	10	5.4	7	{44}	{33}	9	15	— <sup>a</sup>	[0.5 - 2.3]	—	[0.2 - 0.8]
Kenya	20	2	23	11	4.9	47	{38}	{42}	13	22	5.2	[4.5 - 6.0]	1.0	[0.9 - 1.2]
Madagascar	33	7	31	15	5.2	42	18	25	11	18	0.3	[0.1 - 0.6]	0.6	[0.2 - 1.3]
Malawi	37	4	30	17	6.5	58	16	{36}	13	23	9.6	[3.9 - 16.8]	3.4	[1.4 - 5.9]
Mauritius	11	1	—	3	1.9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mozambique	43	6	42	18	5.5	53	40	53	16	23	10.7	[6.0 - 15.8]	3.6	[2.0 - 5.3]
Reunion	2	0	—	4	2.5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rwanda	7	2	9	4	6.1	50	—	—	3	8	1.9	[1.9 - 2.0]	0.8	[0.7 - 0.8]
Somalia	—	—	—	7	7	—	—	—	0	12	0.6	[0.3 - 1.1]	0.2	[0.1 - 0.4]
Tanzania	24	2	26	14	5.7	50	19	46	7	19	3.8	[3.4 - 4.2]	2.8	[2.5 - 3.1]



Table 4: Reproductive Health of Young Women – continued

	MARRIAGE AND FERTILITY <sup>1</sup>						USE OF HEALTH SERVICES <sup>1</sup>				ESTIMATED NO. OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV <sup>2</sup>			
	% Ever Married		% Women Giving Birth by Age 18	% Women Ages 15 to 19 Giving Birth in 1 Yr	Lifetime Births per Woman (TFR)	% Births to Women <Age 20 Attended by Skilled Personnel	% Single Sexually Active Women Using Modern Contraception		% Married Women Using Modern Contraception		Young Women (15 to 24) Rate (%) 2005		Young Men (15 to 24) Rate (%) 2005	
	Female	Male					Age 15 to 19	20 to 24	15 to 19	20 to 24	Estimate	[low estimate - high estimate]	Estimate	[low estimate - high estimate]
Uganda	32	7	42	18	6.9	48	{48}	{50}	12	19	5.0	[4.2 - 5.7]	2.3	[1.9 - 2.6]
Zambia	27	2	35	16	5.7	45	22	{33}	19	23	12.7	[11.9 - 13.6]	3.8	[3.6 - 4.0]
Zimbabwe	23	1	20	11	3.8	79	{35}	{46}	39	52	14.7	[7.7 - 23.2]	4.4	[2.3 - 6.9]
MIDDLE AFRICA	—	—	—	19	6.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Angola	—	—	—	14	6.8	—	—	—	—	—	2.5	[1.2 - 4.2]	0.9	[0.4 - 1.4]
Cameroon	33	9	33	14	5	60	50	53	15	14	4.9	[4.4 - 5.3]	1.4	[1.3 - 1.6]
Central African Republic	42	8	38	13	4.9	51	10	10	2	3	7.3	[2.7 - 13.1]	2.5	[0.9 - 4.5]
Chad	45	1	48	19	6.3	16	{10}	{6}	1	2	2.2	[0.9 - 3.9]	0.9	[0.4 - 1.6]
Congo, Dem. Rep. of	—	—	—	23	6.7	—	—	—	—	—	2.2	[1.0 - 3.8]	0.8	[0.3 - 1.3]
Congo, Rep. of	—	—	—	15	6.3	—	—	—	—	—	3.7	[1.9 - 5.7]	1.2	[0.6 - 1.9]
Gabon	22	4	35	14	4.3	90	28	33	13	14	5.4	[2.7 - 8.7]	1.8	[0.9 - 3.0]
SOUTHERN AFRICA	4	1	20	7	2.9	86	65	75	46	52	—	—	—	—
Botswana	5	2	—	8	3.1	—	—	—	—	—	15.3	[15.2 - 20.3]	5.7	[5.6 - 7.5]
Lesotho	—	—	—	9	3.5	58	—	—	15	33	14.1	[13.3 - 15.0]	5.9	[5.5 - 6.2]
Namibia	6	3	20	9	4.2	78	52	59	{40}	45	13.4	[5.2 - 24.7]	4.4	[1.7 - 8.1]
South Africa	4	1	20	7	2.8	88	66	75	{48}	53	14.8	[13.2 - 16.3]	4.5	[4.0 - 4.9]
Swaziland	9	1	—	4	3.9	—	—	—	—	—	22.7	[11.5 - 35.9]	7.7	[3.9 - 12.1]
NORTH AMERICA	3	1	—	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Canada	3	1	—	2	1.5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
United States	3	1	—	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
LATIN AMERICA/CARIBBEAN	17	4	—	8	2.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
CENTRAL AMERICA	19	6	—	8	2.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Costa Rica	—	—	—	8	2	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
El Salvador	22	2	24	10	3	94	—	—	40	57	—	—	—	—
Guatemala	20	6	24	11	4.4	44	5	13	18	27	—	—	—	—
Honduras	32	7	28	14	4.1	97	—	—	32	46	—	—	—	—
Mexico	17	6	—	7	2.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nicaragua	30	9	28	12	3.8	90	{45}	{64}	53	64	—	—	—	—
Panama	22	5	—	9	2.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
CARIBBEAN	—	—	—	8	2.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cuba	—	—	—	5	1.5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dominican Republic	30	4	25	12	2.9	98	30	52	38	49	—	—	—	—
Haiti	19	3	15	9	4.7	30	33	28	9	27	—	—	—	—
Jamaica	—	—	—	8	2.3	—	—	—	55	63	—	—	—	—
Puerto Rico	19	—	—	6	1.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Trinidad and Tobago	9	1	—	4	1.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
SOUTH AMERICA	16	4	16	8	2.5	—	—	—	45	59	—	—	—	—
Argentina	12	3	—	6	2.4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bolivia	12	4	19	8	3.8	71	19	46	26	36	—	—	—	—
Brazil	17	4	16	9	2.4	88	61	76	47	62	—	—	—	—
Chile	12	5	—	6	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Colombia	18	3	20	9	2.4	98	66	67	47	61	—	—	—	—
Ecuador	22	7	18	10	3.3	—	—	—	24	39	—	—	—	—
Guyana	7	1	—	7	2.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Paraguay	13	2	13	7	2.9	—	—	—	48	62	—	—	—	—

Table 4: Reproductive Health of Young Women – continued

	MARRIAGE AND FERTILITY <sup>1</sup>						USE OF HEALTH SERVICES <sup>1</sup>				ESTIMATED NO. OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV <sup>2</sup>			
	% Ever Married		% Women Giving Birth by Age 18	% Women Ages 15 to 19 Giving Birth in 1 Yr	Lifetime Births per Woman (TFR)	% Births to Women <Age 20 Attended by Skilled Personnel	% Single Sexually Active Women Using Modern Contraception		% Married Women Using Modern Contraception		Young Women (15 to 24) Rate (%) 2005		Young Men (15 to 24) Rate (%) 2005	
	Female	Male					Age 15 to 19	20 to 24	15 to 19	20 to 24	Estimate	[low estimate - high estimate]	Estimate	[low estimate - high estimate]
Peru	11	3	14	7	2.7	57	27	53	40	52	—	—	—	—
Uruguay	13	3	—	7	2.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Venezuela	18	5	—	9	2.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
ASIA	15	3	—	5	2.5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
ASIA (EXCL. CHINA)	24	5	—	8	3	—	—	—	14	30	—	—	—	—
WESTERN ASIA	—	—	—	5	3.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Armenia	9	—	8	5	1.3	97	—	—	{18}	22	—	—	—	—
Azerbaijan	10	2	7	4	2	88	—	—	2	8	—	—	—	—
Bahrain	4	0	—	2	2.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cyprus	8	1	—	1	1.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Georgia	16	—	11	6	1.4	98	—	—	10	20	—	—	—	—
Iraq	—	—	—	4	5.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Israel	4	0	—	2	2.9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Jordan	6	2	5	3	3.7	100	—	—	13	28	—	—	—	—
Kuwait	5	0	—	3	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lebanon	4	—	—	3	2.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Oman	16	1	—	5	3.4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Palestinian Territory	14	2	—	9	5.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Qatar	4	0	—	2	3.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Saudi Arabia	7	—	—	4	4.5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Syria	11	—	12	6	3.7	—	—	—	9	23	—	—	—	—
Turkey	12	—	8	5	2.4	83	—	—	17	31	—	—	—	—
United Arab Emirates	8	—	—	2	2.5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Yemen	17	—	20	8	6.2	41	—	—	5	10	—	—	—	—
SOUTH-CENTRAL ASIA	32	6	29	10	3.2	40	—	—	9	24	—	—	—	—
Afghanistan	—	—	—	13	6.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bangladesh	48	3	46	14	3	13	—	—	34	47	—	—	—	—
Bhutan	27	8	—	4	4.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
India	34	6	28	11	3	42	—	—	5	21	—	—	—	—
Iran	18	3	—	2	2.1	—	—	—	26	43	—	—	—	—
Kazakhstan	9	1	6	4	2	98	{49}	{67}	{16}	36	—	—	—	—
Kyrgyzstan	14	1	4	8	2.6	98	—	—	{21}	39	—	—	—	—
Nepal	42	12	26	11	3.7	18	—	—	9	21	—	—	—	—
Pakistan	21	6	—	7	4.8	—	—	—	2	9	—	—	—	—
Sri Lanka	7	—	—	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tajikistan	—	—	—	3	4.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Turkmenistan	6	—	2	3	2.9	97	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Uzbekistan	7	1	4	4	2.7	100	—	—	{22}	49	—	—	—	—
SOUTHEAST ASIA	12	3	—	4	2.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cambodia	13	3	12	4	4.5	35	—	—	7	12	—	—	—	—
Indonesia	15	3	12	5	2.6	58	—	—	47	59	—	—	—	—
Laos	27	—	—	9	4.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Malaysia	5	1	—	2	3.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Myanmar	11	3	—	2	2.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Philippines	9	3	7	5	3.5	56	—	—	13	30	—	—	—	—

Table 4: Reproductive Health of Young Women – continued

	MARRIAGE AND FERTILITY <sup>1</sup>						USE OF HEALTH SERVICES <sup>1</sup>				ESTIMATED NO. OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV <sup>2</sup>			
	% Ever Married		% Women Giving Birth by Age 18	% Women Ages 15 to 19 Giving Birth in 1 Yr	Lifetime Births per Woman (TFR)	% Births to Women <Age 20 Attended by Skilled Personnel	% Single Sexually Active Women Using Modern Contraception		% Married Women Using Modern Contraception		Young Women (15 to 24) Rate (%) 2005		Young Men (15 to 24) Rate (%) 2005	
	Female	Male					Age 15 to 19	20 to 24	15 to 19	20 to 24	Estimate	[low estimate - high estimate]	Estimate	[low estimate - high estimate]
Singapore	1	0	—	1	1.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Thailand	15	4	—	5	1.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Viet Nam	4	—	4	2	2.2	74	—	—	{14}	45	—	—	—	—
EAST ASIA	1	1	—	1	1.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
China	1	1	—	1	1.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hong Kong, Special Administrative Region	2	1	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Japan	1	0	—	2	1.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Korea, North	—	—	—	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Korea, South	1	0	—	2	1.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mongolia	6	1	—	5	2.5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
EUROPE	—	—	—	2	1.4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
NORTHERN EUROPE	2	—	—	2	1.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Denmark	1	0	—	1	1.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Estonia	—	—	—	2	1.5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Finland	1	0	—	1	1.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ireland	0	0	—	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Latvia	1	0	—	2	1.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lithuania	2	0	—	2	1.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Norway	0	0	—	1	1.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sweden	0	0	—	1	1.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
United Kingdom	2	1	—	3	1.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
WESTERN EUROPE	—	—	—	1	1.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Austria	3	1	—	1	1.4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Belgium	1	0	—	1	1.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
France	0	0	—	1	1.9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Germany	1	0	—	1	1.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Netherlands	1	0	—	1	1.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Switzerland	1	0	—	1	1.4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
EASTERN EUROPE	—	—	—	3	1.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Belarus	6	1	—	3	1.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bulgaria	—	—	—	5	1.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Czech Republic	1	0	—	1	1.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hungary	2	0	—	2	1.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Moldova	12	—	—	3	1.2	100	—	—	34	42	—	—	—	—
Poland	2	0	—	2	1.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Romania	6	0	5	4	1.3	98	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Russia	—	—	—	3	1.4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Slovakia	2	0	—	2	1.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ukraine	11	—	—	3	1.2	—	—	—	27	34	—	—	—	—
SOUTHERN EUROPE	3	—	—	1	1.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Albania	10	0	4	4	2	—	—	—	3	4	—	—	—	—
Bosnia-Herzegovina	—	—	—	2	1.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Croatia	2	0	—	2	1.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Greece	6	1	—	1	1.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—



Table 4: Reproductive Health of Young Women – continued

	MARRIAGE AND FERTILITY <sup>1</sup>					USE OF HEALTH SERVICES <sup>1</sup>				ESTIMATED NO. OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV <sup>2</sup>			
	% Ever Married		% Women	% Women	Lifetime	% Single Sexually		% Married Women		Young Women (15 to 24)		Young Men (15 to 24)	
	Ages 15 to 19	Male	Giving Birth by Age 18	Ages 15 to 19 Giving Birth in 1 Yr	Births per Woman (TFR)	Women <Age 20 Attended by Skilled Personnel	Active Women Using Modern Contraception Age 15 to 19	20 to 24	Using Modern Contraception 15 to 19	20 to 24	Rate (%) 2005 Estimate [low estimate - high estimate]	Rate (%) 2005 Estimate [low estimate - high estimate]	Rate (%) 2005 Estimate [low estimate - high estimate]
Italy	1	0	—	1	1.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Macedoniab	9	1	—	3	1.5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Portugal	6	1	—	2	1.4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Serbia and Montenegro	11	2	—	3	1.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Slovenia	0	0	—	1	1.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Spain	2	1	—	1	1.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
OCEANIA	6	—	—	3	2.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Australia	1	0	—	2	1.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fiji	10	2	—	4	2.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
New Zealand	7	3	—	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Papua-New Guinea	21	—	—	7	4.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

1 The World's Youth 2006 Data Sheet (Population Reference Bureau), available from: <http://www.prb.org/pdf06/WorldsYouth2006DataSheet.pdf> (accessed 01/12/06). Used with kind permission from Population Reference Bureau

2 Information sourced and reproduced with kind permission from UNAIDS (2006). 2006 Report on the Global Aids Epidemic (UNAIDS), available from: [http://data.unaids.org/pub/GlobalReport/2006/2006\\_GR\\_ANN2\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/GlobalReport/2006/2006_GR_ANN2_en.pdf) (accessed 04/12/06)

Key

- Data unavailable or inapplicable
- Italics Data refers to year prior to 1997 or earlier than the year listed
- { } Fewer than 100 cases; may not be representative of the whole population

Notes

Percent of Women Giving Birth by Age 18: The percentage of all women who give birth before their 18th birthday. In countries where only ever-married women are surveyed, data on out-of-wedlock births is not available.

Percent of Women Ages 15–19 Giving Birth in One Year: Births per 100 women ages 15–19 (the age-specific fertility rate, divided by 10). The estimates are derived from the most recent demographic survey or from UN projections for 2000–2005.

Lifetime Births per Woman (TFR): The total fertility rate, defined as the number of children a woman would have if current age-specific fertility rates remain constant throughout her childbearing years.

Percent of Births Attended by Skilled Personnel: Skilled personnel include doctors, nurses, and midwives. Traditional birth attendants, even where trained, are not included.

Percent of Women Using Modern Contraception: The percentage of single, sexually active or married women who are currently using a modern method of contraception. “Single, sexually active” are unmarried women who report having had sexual relations in the last month.

“Married” women include those in consensual unions.

“Modern” methods include clinic and supply methods such as oral pills, injectables, implants, intrauterine devices, condoms, and sterilization.

Ethiopia: In early 2006 important new data from a national community-based survey and from rural surveillance sites had become available in Ethiopia. At the time when this report went to press, those new data had only partially been analysed. As a result, the estimates for Ethiopia in this report should be considered preliminary. UNAIDS and WHO will make new estimates, based on a comprehensive analysis of all data, available on their websites as soon as possible.

Table 5: Under fives weight comparison

Children under-five years of age who are underweight, by sex, percentage in 1996-2005			
	Boys	Girls	Boys/Girls
Developing regions	27	28	0.96
Northern Africa	10	8	1.25
Sub-Saharan Africa	30	28	1.07
Latin America & Caribbean	8	7	1.14
Eastern Asia	10	11	0.91
Southern Asia	43	46	0.93
South-Eastern Asia	29	29	1.00
Western Asia	15	14	1.07
Oceania	–	–	–
The Millennium Development Goals Report (2006) available from: <a href="http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Static/Data/UNSD%20MDG%20Report%202006%20Statistical%20Annex%20r15.pdf">http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Static/Data/UNSD%20MDG%20Report%202006%20Statistical%20Annex%20r15.pdf</a> (accessed 04/11/06)			

**Table 6: Girls and Young Women at Work**

HDI rank	Female Economic Activity <sup>1</sup> (ages 15 and older)			Child labour (5-14 years) 1999-2004* <sup>2</sup>		
	Rate	Index	As % of	Total	Male	Female
	(%)	(1990=100)	male rate			
	2004	2004	2004			
<b>HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT</b>						
1 Norway	63.1	111	87	..	..	..
2 Iceland	70.9	105	87	..	..	..
3 Australia	56.1	108	79	..	..	..
4 Ireland	51.9	146	72	..	..	..
5 Sweden	58.8	93	87	..	..	..
6 Canada	60.2	104	83	..	..	..
7 Japan	48.5	97	65	..	..	..
8 United States	59.6	105	81	..	..	..
9 Switzerland	60.1	115	79	..	..	..
10 Netherlands	55.8	128	76	..	..	..
11 Finland	56.9	98	86	..	..	..
12 Luxembourg	44.1	122	68	..	..	..
13 Belgium	43.4	119	72	..	..	..
14 Austria	49.3	114	75	..	..	..
15 Denmark	59.4	96	84	..	..	..
16 France	48.2	105	79	..	..	..
17 Italy	37.0	103	61	..	..	..
18 United Kingdom	55.0	104	79	..	..	..
19 Spain	44.2	130	65	..	..	..
20 New Zealand	59.8	112	81	..	..	..
21 Germany	50.4	114	76	..	..	..
22 Hong Kong, China (SAR)	52.9	112	74	..	..	..
23 Israel	49.7	121	84	..	..	..
24 Greece	42.7	119	66	..	..	..
25 Singapore	50.8	101	66	..	..	..
26 Korea, Rep. of	50.1	106	68	..	..	..
27 Slovenia	53.4	99	80	..	..	..
28 Portugal	55.2	112	79	..	..	..
29 Cyprus	53.0	111	74	..	..	..
30 Czech Republic	51.7	85	76	..	..	..
31 Barbados	64.6	109	83	..	..	..
32 Malta	32.5	153	47	..	..	..
33 Kuwait	48.0	138	56	..	..	..
34 Brunei Darussalam	44.3	99	56	..	..	..
35 Hungary	42.1	91	73	..	..	..
36 Argentina	52.2	136	68	..	..	..
37 Poland	47.9	84	78	..	..	..
38 Chile	36.4	113	51	..	..	..
39 Bahrain	29.2	104	33	5	6	3
40 Estonia	52.2	81	80	..	..	..
41 Lithuania	51.8	87	81	..	..	..
42 Slovakia	51.9	87	76	..	..	..
43 Uruguay	55.7	122	71	..	..	..
44 Croatia	44.7	96	74	..	..	..
45 Latvia	49.1	78	77	..	..	..
46 Qatar	35.7	121	40	..	..	..
47 Seychelles	..	..	..	..	..	..

**Table 6: Girls and Young Women at Work – continued**

HDI rank	Female Economic Activity <sup>1</sup> (ages 15 and older)			Child labour (5-14 years) 1999-2004* <sup>2</sup>		
	Rate	Index	As % of	Total	Male	Female
	(%)	(1990=100)	male rate			
	2004	2004	2004			
<b>Making a living</b>						
48 Costa Rica	43.7	133	54	50y	71y	29y
49 United Arab Emirates	37.4	149	41	..	..	..
50 Cuba	43.8	112	59	..	..	..
51 Saint Kitts and Nevis	..	..	..	..	..	..
52 Bahamas	64.5	105	91	..	..	..
53 Mexico	39.9	115	49	16y	15y	16y
54 Bulgaria	41.9	70	79	..	..	..
55 Tonga	46.3	126	62	..	..	..
56 Oman	21.9	145	27	..	..	..
57 Trinidad and Tobago	46.6	112	61	2	3	2
58 Panama	49.9	129	63	..	..	..
59 Antigua and Barbuda	..	..	..	..	..	..
60 Romania	50.7	95	80	1y	..	..
61 Malaysia	46.1	105	56	..	..	..
62 Bosnia and Herzegovina	57.9	96	85	11	12	10
63 Mauritius	42.2	101	53	..	..	..
<b>MEDIUM HUMAN DEVELOPMENT</b>						
64 Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	30.8	161	39	..	..	..
65 Russian Federation	54.3	90	80	..	..	..
66 Macedonia, TFYR	40.9	85	63	..	..	..
67 Belarus	52.5	87	82	..	..	..
68 Dominica	..	..	..	..	..	..
69 Brazil	56.3	127	70	7y	9y	4y
70 Colombia	60.5	133	75	5	7	4
71 Saint Lucia	53.4	113	67	..	..	..
72 Venezuela, RB	55.9	148	67	7	9	5
73 Albania	49.4	85	69	23	26	19
74 Thailand	65.4	87	81	..	..	..
75 Samoa (Western)	39.6	101	51	..	..	..
76 Saudi Arabia	17.3	116	22	..	..	..
77 Ukraine	49.9	87	79	..	..	..
78 Lebanon	31.7	100	40	6	8	4
79 Kazakhstan	65.0	106	87	..	..	..
80 Armenia	48.1	67	79	..	..	..
81 China	69.2	95	84	..	..	..
82 Peru	58.2	124	71	..	..	..
83 Ecuador	58.9	181	72	6y	9y	4y
84 Philippines	53.8	114	65	11	12	10
85 Grenada	..	..	..	..	..	..
86 Jordan	27.0	153	35	..	..	..
87 Tunisia	27.9	134	37	..	..	..
88 Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	53.5	120	67	..	..	..
89 Suriname	33.1	91	52	..	..	..
90 Fiji	51.4	105	63	..	..	..
91 Paraguay	64.2	124	76	8y	10y	6y
92 Turkey	27.8	81	36	..	..	..
93 Sri Lanka	35.0	78	45	..	..	..
94 Dominican Republic	45.5	125	55	9	11	6

Table 6: Girls and Young Women at Work – continued

Making a living	Female Economic Activity <sup>1</sup> (ages 15 and older)			Child labour (5-14 years) 1999-2004* <sup>2</sup>		
	Rate	Index	As % of	Total	Male	Female
	(%)	(1990=100)	male rate			
HDI rank	2004	2004	2004			
95 Belize	42.4	133	52	..	..	..
96 Iran, Islamic Rep. of	37.2	173	50	..	..	..
97 Georgia	51.1	74	67	..	..	..
98 Maldives	46.1	229	64	..	..	..
99 Azerbaijan	59.6	94	81	8	9	7
100 Occupied Palestinian Territories	10.3	112	15	..	..	..
101 El Salvador	46.7	92	61	..	..	..
102 Algeria	34.8	154	44	..	..	..
103 Guyana	43.3	119	53	19	21	17
104 Jamaica	54.8	84	73	2	3	1
105 Turkmenistan	60.4	94	83	..	..	..
106 Cape Verde	34.1	82	44	..	..	..
107 Syrian Arab Republic	38.0	133	44	8y	10y	6y
108 Indonesia	50.7	101	60	4y	5y	4y
109 Viet Nam	72.4	98	93	23	23	22
110 Kyrgyzstan	55.1	94	74	..	..	..
111 Egypt	20.1	76	28	6	6	5
112 Nicaragua	35.5	100	41	10y	..	..
113 Uzbekistan	56.2	94	78	15	18	12
114 Moldova, Rep. of	56.6	92	81	28	29	28
115 Bolivia	62.1	128	74	21	22	20
116 Mongolia	53.9	97	66	30	30	30
117 Honduras	52.2	156	59	..	..	..
118 Guatemala	33.7	115	41	24y	..	..
119 Vanuatu	79.3	100	90	..	..	..
120 Equatorial Guinea	50.5	105	56	27	27	27
121 South Africa	46.4	85	59	..	..	..
122 Tajikistan	46.5	89	74	18	19	17
123 Morocco	26.7	109	33	11y	..	..
124 Gabon	61.5	99	75	..	..	..
125 Namibia	47.0	96	74	..	..	..
126 India	34.0	94	41	14	14	15
127 São Tomé and Príncipe	29.6	80	40	14	15	13
128 Solomon Islands	54.4	97	66	..	..	..
129 Cambodia	74.4	96	93	..	..	..
130 Myanmar	68.2	99	79	..	..	..
131 Botswana	45.7	80	67	..	..	..
132 Comoros	57.8	92	66	28	27	29
133 Lao People's Dem. Rep.	54.0	101	67	24	23	25
134 Pakistan	32.0	115	38	..	..	..
135 Bhutan	44.3	127	55	..	..	..
136 Ghana	70.5	92	94	57y	57y	58y
137 Bangladesh	52.9	84	61	7	10	4
138 Nepal	49.7	103	63	31	30	33
139 Papua New Guinea	71.8	100	97	..	..	..
140 Congo	56.4	98	65	..	..	..
141 Sudan	23.7	86	33	13	14	12
142 Timor-Leste	53.5	107	66	4y	4y	4y

Table 6: Girls and Young Women at Work – continued

Making a living	Female Economic Activity <sup>1</sup> (ages 15 and older)			Child labour (5-14 years) 1999-2004* <sup>2</sup>		
	Rate	Index	As % of	Total	Male	Female
	(%)	(1990=100)	male rate			
HDI rank	2004	2004	2004			
143 Madagascar	78.9	100	92	30	35	26
144 Cameroon	51.8	93	64	51	52	50
145 Uganda	79.7	99	92	34	34	33
146 Swaziland	31.5	83	43	8	8	8
LOW HUMAN DEVELOPMENT						
147 Togo	50.5	94	56	60	62	59
148 Djibouti	53.1	95	64	..	..	..
149 Lesotho	46.3	82	64	17	19	14
150 Yemen	29.4	107	39	..	..	..
151 Zimbabwe	64.2	92	77	26y	..	..
152 Kenya	69.3	93	78	26	27	25
153 Mauritania	54.3	97	65	10y	..	..
154 Haiti	55.2	96	67	..	..	..
155 Gambia	59.3	95	69	22	23	22
156 Senegal	56.5	92	68	33	36	30
157 Eritrea	58.2	95	65	..	..	..
158 Rwanda	80.4	94	95	31	31	30
159 Nigeria	45.6	95	54	39y	..	..
160 Guinea	79.4	100	90	..	..	..
161 Angola	73.8	100	81	22	21	23
162 Tanzania, U. Rep. of	86.0	97	95	32	34	30
163 Benin	54.0	93	63	26y	23y	29y
164 Côte d'Ivoire	39.0	90	44	35	34	36
165 Zambia	66.1	100	73	11	10	11
166 Malawi	85.2	100	95	17	18	16
167 Congo, Dem. Rep. of the	61.2	101	68	28y	26y	29y
168 Mozambique	84.7	96	102	..	..	..
169 Burundi	91.8	101	99	24	26	23
170 Ethiopia	70.9	98	79	43y	47y	37y
171 Chad	65.5	102	84	57	60	55
172 Central African Republic	70.4	99	79	56	54	57
173 Guinea-Bissau	60.9	105	66	54	54	54
174 Burkina Faso	77.6	101	87	57y	..	..
175 Mali	72.4	100	85	30	33	28
176 Sierra Leone	56.0	105	60	57	57	57
177 Niger	71.2	101	75	66	69	64

1. UNDP, Human Development Report 2006, 2006. Reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan.

2. UNICEF, State of the World's Children 2006 (2005). Reproduced with kind permission from UNICEF.

y Indicates data that differ from the standard deviation or refer to only part of a country but are included in the calculation of regional and global averages

\* Data refer to the most recent year available during the period specified in the column heading

Child labour – Percentage of children aged 5 to 14 years of age involved in child labour activities at the moment of the survey. A child is considered to be involved in child labour activities under the following classification: (a) children 5 to 11 years of age that during the week preceding the survey did at least one hour of economic activity or at least 28 hours of domestic work, and (b) children 12 to 14 years of age that during the week preceding the survey did at least 14 hours of economic activity or at least 42 hours of economic activity and domestic work combined.



# For Further Information on Girls' Rights

## Regional Organisations

**Forum of African Women's Educationalists (FAWE)**  
PO Box 21394 00505  
Ngong Road  
Nairobi, Kenya  
+254 20 38 731 31  
[www.fawe.org](http://www.fawe.org)

**Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children**  
C/o ECA P.O. Box 3001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
+251 115 51 57 93  
<http://www.iac-ciaf.com/>

**European Women's Lobby**  
+32 (0)2 217 90 20  
[www.womenlobby.org](http://www.womenlobby.org)

**International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP) Asia Pacific**  
80-B Jalan Bangsar 59200,  
Kuala Lumpur  
Malaysia  
+60 (3) 2282 2255  
[www.iwraw-ap.org/](http://www.iwraw-ap.org/)

**Asia Pacific Women's Watch**  
C/o Women and Gender Institute,  
Miriam College, Loyola Heights, Diliman,  
Quezon City, Philippines 1101  
+632 426 0169  
<http://apww.isiswomen.org/>

## International Girls' and Women's Organisations

**World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts**  
World Bureau, Olave Centre, 12c Lyndhurst Road,  
London, NW3 5PQ, UK  
+44 (0)20 7794 1181  
<http://www.wagggsworld.org/en/home>

**YWCA**  
World YWCA, 16 Ancienne Route,  
1218 Grand Saconnex, Geneva, Switzerland  
+41(0) 22 929 6040  
[http://www.worldywca.info/index.php/ywca/world\\_ywca](http://www.worldywca.info/index.php/ywca/world_ywca)

**Association for Women's Rights in Development**  
215 Spadina Ave., Suite 150, Toronto, Ontario,  
M5T 2C7, Canada  
+1 416 594 3773  
<http://www.awid.org/index.php>

**Soroptimist International**  
87 Glisson Road, Cambridge, CB1 2HG,  
United Kingdom  
<http://www.soroptimistinternational.org/index.html>

## INGOs

**Amnesty International (Stop Violence Against Women)**  
1 Easton Street, London, WC1X 0DW, UK  
+44(0) 20 7413 5476  
<http://web.amnesty.org/actforwomen/index-eng>

**Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED)**  
22 Millers Yard, Mill Lane, Cambridge,  
CB2 1RQ, UK  
[www.camfed.org](http://www.camfed.org)

**Defence for Children International**  
International Secretariat, 1 Rue de Varembe,  
PO Box 88, CH 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland  
+41(0) 22 734 05 58  
<http://www.dci-is.org/>

**Human Rights Watch (Children's Rights Division)**  
350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor,  
New York, NY 10118-3299 USA  
+1 212 290 4700  
<http://www.hrw.org/children/>

**(Children's Rights Division and Women's Right Division)**  
<http://www.hrw.org/children/>

**Ipas**  
PO Box 5027, Chapel Hill, NC 27514, USA  
+1 919 967 7052  
<http://www.ipas.org/english/>

**International Save the Children Alliance**  
Second Floor, Cambridge House,  
100 Cambridge Grove, London W6 0LE,  
United Kingdom  
+44 (0) 20 8748 2554  
<http://www.savethechildren.net/alliance/index.html>

**NGO Working Group on Girls' Rights**  
c/o UNICEF, UNICEF House,  
3 United Nations Plaza,  
New York, New York 10017, USA  
+1 212 326 7000  
[www.girlsrights.org](http://www.girlsrights.org)

**Women's World Summit Foundation**  
P.O. Box 143, 1211 Geneva 20,  
Switzerland  
+41(0) 22 738 66 19  
<http://www.woman.ch/home.php>

**Womankind Worldwide**  
2nd Floor, Development House,  
56-64 Leonard Street, London EC2A 4LT,  
United Kingdom  
+44 (0) 20 7549 0360  
<http://www.womankind.org.uk/index.html>

**World Vision International**  
34834 Weyerhaeuser Way So., Federal Way,  
WA 98001, USA  
+1 253 815 1000  
<http://www.worldvision.org/>

**Plan International Headquarters**  
Christchurch Way  
Woking, Surrey  
GU21 6JG  
United Kingdom  
+ 44 (0)1483 755 155  
[www.plan-international.org](http://www.plan-international.org)

# For Further Information on Girls’ Rights – continued

## UN Agencies

**International Research and Training  
Institute for the Advancement of Women  
(INSTRAW)**

Calle César Nicolás Penson 102-A,  
Santo Domingo, DN, Dominican Republic  
+1 809 685-2111  
<http://www.un-instraw.org/en/>

**Office of the Special Adviser on Gender  
Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)**

Department of Economic and Social Affairs,  
Two United Nations Plaza, 12th Floor,  
New York, NY 10017, USA  
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/>

**UNICEF**

UNICEF House, 3 United Nations Plaza,  
New York, New York 10017, USA  
+1 212 326 700  
<http://www.unicef.org/>

**UNIFEM**

304 East 45th Street, 15th Floor,  
New York, NY 10017, USA  
+1 212 906 6400  
<http://www.unifem.org/>

**UNFPA**

United Nations Population Fund,  
220 East 42nd St.,  
New York, NY 10017, USA  
+1 212 297 5000  
<http://www.unfpa.org/>  
**United Nations Division for the  
Advancement of Women (UNDAW)**  
2 UN Plaza  
DC2-12th Floor  
New York, NY 10017  
USA  
+ 1 212 963 3463  
[www.un.org/daw](http://www.un.org/daw)

**International Labour Office**

4, route des Morillons  
CH-1211 Geneva 22  
Switzerland  
[www.ilo.org/dyn/gender/gender.home](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/gender/gender.home)

**Office of the Special Rapporteur on  
Violence Against Women**

UN High Commissioner on Human Rights  
2 UN Plaza  
New York, NY 10017  
USA  
[www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org)

