



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



USAID EDUCATION: GIRLS' EDUCATION

Investments in girls' education in developing countries support U.S. foreign policy, demonstrate U.S. compassion and generosity, drive development efforts, and help reduce extreme poverty.

USAID believes that education is a foundational driver of development and fundamental to achieving self-reliance. When children and youth go to school and receive training in skills they can use in the workforce and to navigate life, they are able to build more hopeful and prosperous futures for themselves, their families, communities, and countries. USAID works in more than 50 developing countries to ensure that investments in education systems—from pre-primary to higher education—enable all children and youth to acquire the education and skills needed to be productive members of society.

Globally, 132 million girls are out of school.¹ In conflict-affected countries, adolescent girls are at particular risk—90 percent are likely to be out of secondary school.² Gender issues become especially salient during puberty, when norms, culture, and safety issues cause girls' lives and opportunities to narrow, while those of boys keep widening. Gender and social norms and expectations around young women's roles and inadequate or inaccessible infrastructure—including poor water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities—often prevent girls from continuing their education.

"Our education programs address the global challenge that nearly 132 million girls and young women are not currently in the classroom. Even one extra year of secondary school can increase their future earnings by as much as 20 percent."
— USAID Administrator
Mark Green

¹ [UIS/GEM REPORT FACT SHEET 48, P.5.](#) ² [GEM REPORT, POLICY PAPER 21, JUNE 2015, P.3.](#)

HOW USAID INVESTS IN EDUCATION

USAID's programming takes into account the gender-related constraints that prevent access of both boys and girls to quality education. A combined set of interventions that promote equitable access and gender equality at primary, secondary, and higher education levels and ensure adequate physical facilities are often needed to address systemic barriers.

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

- In **Liberia**, the Learning Links Activity in Bong County improves the literacy and numeracy skills of girls who have left school due to pregnancy so they can continue learning and eventually return to school. Through trained tutor-mentors, a special curriculum, and SMS-based evaluations, the activity provides access to quality literacy and numeracy learning resources to girls who are not in school. Learning Links also uses psychosocial services to connect learners to sources of support. Three hundred girls and approximately 100 tutor-mentors were supported in Year One, and 2,500 girls returned to school.
- In **Malawi**, as everywhere, for girls to achieve academic success, they must enter school, stay in school, be learning while in school, and be healthy and supported by their community at all times. USAID's Give Girls a Chance to Learn project has supported 1,504 secondary school scholarship recipients (75 percent female), mentored 1,691 fathers to more proactively support their adolescent children, and used sports to develop life skills in more than 21,000 primary and secondary school learners.
- In **Afghanistan**, the University Support and Workforce Development Program supports the Ministry of Higher Education and universities in Afghanistan in developing and implementing a Non-Discrimination and Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy for Higher Education Institutions. The program developed the systems, procedures, materials, and training packages necessary to scale up implementation at universities throughout the country.
- In **Pakistan**, where attacks on schools have disrupted many children's education—particularly girls—USAID has reached more than 795,090 girls since 2015 through reading programs, enrolled or re-enrolled more than 1,054,703 girls in school in areas of the country affected by crisis and conflict, and built or rehabilitated more than 619 co-ed or girls' schools.

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