The Global Partnership for Education supports inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all.

**CHALLENGE**

Only 26% of low-income countries have as many girls as boys in primary school. At the secondary level, gender parity exists in only 10% of low-income countries.

- Despite encouraging progress made since 2000, 61 million girls remain out of primary and lower-secondary school. Girls are still more likely than boys to never enroll in school, and more than half will almost certainly not.

- Poverty is the biggest barrier to gender equity, especially when coupled with one or more additional factors, such as unfavorable school environments, discriminatory social and cultural factors, disability, language, early marriage and school-related violence.

- Fragility and conflict are also significant barriers. In GPE partner countries affected by fragility and conflict, there are 37% more girls than boys not in primary school, compared to only 4% more girls out of school in other GPE partner countries.

- Dropping out of school is an acute problem for both girls and boys in many GPE partner countries. Boys can fare worse in certain countries, particularly at the secondary level.

**How many adolescent girls compared to boys reach the last grade of lower secondary education? (gross intake ratio)**

- | Category | Description |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys disadvantaged</td>
<td>(less than 0.80)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girls disadvantaged</td>
<td>(0.80-0.89)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girls disadvantaged</td>
<td>(0.90-0.96)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender parity</td>
<td>(0.97-1.03)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boys disadvantaged</td>
<td>(1.04-1.10)</td>
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<td>Boys disadvantaged</td>
<td>(1.11-1.20)</td>
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<td>Boys disadvantaged</td>
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UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Gender equality in education has proven impacts on many Sustainable Development Goals, including economic growth, health, nutrition and agricultural productivity.

Educated girls grow up to be educated mothers, and educated mothers invest more than others in their children’s education. Some countries lose more than US$1 billion a year by failing to educate girls at the same level as boys.

Educated girls and young women are usually healthier than girls who didn’t go to school; they also have healthier children, who are likely to live past the age of 5. Over the past four decades, the global increase in women’s education has prevented more than 4 million child deaths.

GPE’s Gender Equality Policy and Strategy 2016–2020 reflects a shift in the global agenda from a narrower focus on girls’ education to gender equality. Hence, it also includes areas where boys are disadvantaged, as well as gender issues concerning teachers, administrators and systems.

GPE and the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) have produced guidelines for countries to conduct gender analysis as part of their education sector planning.

Also, with UNICEF and UNGEI, GPE has funded efforts in several countries to analyze school-related gender-based violence and raise awareness on this issue.

GPE supports policy dialogue on gender equality led by national governments and including civil society and other partners, to foster strong mutual accountability.

GPE provides up to US$100 million in grants for interventions that promote gender equality. At least 33 GPE implementation grants totaling US$1.5 billion supplement domestic investments in gender equality.

GPE’s results-based funding model helps to prioritize gender equality.

GPE support has contributed to an additional 9.3 million girls enrolled in school across GPE partner countries.

The primary school completion rate of girls in GPE partner countries has risen from 57% in 2002 to 71% in 2014. For boys, this number has grown from 68% to 75%.

In GPE countries affected by fragility and conflict, the number of girls completing school for every 100 boys has risen from 74 to 88 for primary, and from 68 to 82 for lower secondary, since 2002.

The lower secondary completion rate of girls in GPE partner countries increased from 35% to 47%; for boys it has increased from 41% to 52%.

In Nicaragua, which joined GPE in 2002, both girls and boys face gender discrimination. Recent research shows that only 40% of boys complete lower secondary school compared with 52% of girls. In 2016, a GPE grant helped fund an analysis that looks closely at gender disparities in access, and it details concrete steps for greater retention and learning among Nicaraguan girls and boys.

For all references and sources, please see the full policy brief and our education data page.