**Girls Education**

**Message Framing**

**Girls’ education can break the cycle of poverty and create a healthier, wealthier and more educated family.** In many countries and communities, girls are often discriminated against and the most vulnerable face multiple barriers to education, ranging from child marriage and child labour to sexual exploitation and trafficking. Yet creative solutions to gender equality and girls’ education have demonstrated the impact that educating a girl can have on her community and country.

**Key challenges**

* **Millions of girls are out of school.** It is estimated that 132 million girls and young women are not in primary or secondary school ([GEM](https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/report/2020/inclusion), 2020).
* **Failure to educate girls is costly.** Ongoing barriers to girls’ education are costing countries between US$15 trillion to US$30 trillion in lost lifetime productivity and earnings ([World Bank](https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/factsheet/2018/07/11/missed-opportunities-the-high-cost-of-not-educating-girls), 2018).

**Making the case**

* **Education prevents child marriage.** Universal secondary education for girls can virtually eliminate child marriage. In 18 of the 20 countries with the highest rates of child marriage, girls with a secondary education are six times less likely to be married as a child compared to girls with no education ([World Bank](https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/factsheet/2018/07/11/missed-opportunities-the-high-cost-of-not-educating-girls), 2018).
* **Better educated mothers have healthier children and families.** For example, if all mothers completed secondary school, the likelihood that their children will contract malaria would be 36% lower ([Brookings](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/What-Works-in-Girls-Educationlowres.pdf), 2016).
* **One additional year of school can increase a girl’s earnings by up to a fifth** – bringing benefits for the girls themselves, their future families and their communities ([EFA GMR](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000223115), 2013).
* **Educating girls leads to economic growth.** Even a 1% increase in the number of women completing secondary education can increase a country’s economic growth by 0.3% ([Brookings](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/What-Works-in-Girls-Educationlowres.pdf), 2016).
* **Educating girls raises earnings.** Each additional year of schooling helps a woman increase her wages by about 12% ([Brookings](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/What-Works-in-Girls-Educationlowres.pdf), 2016).
* **Increasing girls’ education decreases violence.** If girls and boys had equal access to education, the chance of violence and conflict would decrease by 37% ([Education Cannot Wait](https://www.educationcannotwait.org/download/ecw-case-for-investment/?wpdmdl=2888&ind=RUNXX0Nhc2VGb3JJbnZlc3RtZW50X3dlYi5wZGY), 2019).
* **Educated mothers have healthier families.** When a mother can read, her children are 50% more likely to live past the age of five, twice as likely to attend school, and 50% more likely to be immunised ([Education Cannot Wait](https://www.educationcannotwait.org/download/ecw-case-for-investment/?wpdmdl=2888&ind=RUNXX0Nhc2VGb3JJbnZlc3RtZW50X3dlYi5wZGY), 2019).
* **Educating girls saves lives.** If all women in India and Nigeria had completed secondary education, the under-five mortality rate would have been 61% lower in India and 42% lower in Nigeria, saving 1.35 million children's lives ([EFA GMR](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000223115), 2013).
* **Educating girls means they can earn more and have more secure working conditions.** Women with good literacy skills in Pakistan earn 95% more than women with weak literacy skills ([EFA GMR](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000223115), 2013).

**Key Talking Points**

* It is estimated that 132 million girls and young women are not in primary or secondary school.
* Educating girls saves countries money.
* Each additional year that a girl is in school increases earnings, promotes economic growth, leads to healthier families, and lowers the rate of child marriage.
* Progress is being made. The number of out-of-school girls worldwide dropped by 79 million between 1998 and 2018, and gender disparities have narrowed considerably.
* But there is still a long way to go. The failure to educate girls costs countries between US$15 trillion and US$30 trillion in lost lifetime productivity and earnings.