

Gender and social exclusion

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Marlaine Lockheed

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A graphic for the 'Education policy series' featuring a blue background with a chalkboard showing the letters 'Ya Bb Cc Dd' written in white. In the foreground, there is a colorful illustration of a globe's frame with several children interacting with it. The text 'Education policy series' is written in white, following the curve of the globe's frame.

Education policy series



International Academy of Education

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Preface

Education Policy Series

The International Academy of Education and the International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO) are jointly publishing the Education Policy Series. The purpose of the series is to summarize what is known, based on research, about selected policy issues in the field of education.

The series was designed for rapid consultation 'on the run' by busy senior decision-makers in ministries of education, who rarely have time to read lengthy research reports, to attend conferences and seminars, or to become engaged in extended scholarly debates with educational policy research specialists.

The booklets have been (a) focused on policy topics that the Academy considers to be of high priority across many ministries of education – in both developed and developing countries, (b) structured for clarity – containing an introductory overview, a research-based discussion of around ten key issues considered to be critical to the topic of the booklet, and references that provide supporting evidence and further reading related to the discussion of issues, (c) restricted in length – requiring around 30-45 minutes of reading time; and (d) sized to fit easily into a jacket pocket – providing opportunities for readily accessible consultation inside or outside the office.

The authors of the series were selected by the International Academy of Education because of their expertise concerning the booklet topics, and also because of their recognised ability to communicate complex research findings in a manner that can be readily understood and used for policy purposes.

The booklets will appear first in English, and may be published in other languages.

Four booklets will be published each year and made freely available for download from the websites of the International Academy of Education and the International Institute for Educational Planning. A limited printed edition will also be prepared shortly after electronic publication.

This booklet

This booklet is about the combined effects of gender and social exclusion on student participation and performance in basic education. How extensive is the problem? Why is it important? What education policies act as hidden barriers? Are legal and administrative remedies sufficient? What about affirmative action? Which policies have been effective in reaching and teaching socially excluded girls, and which ones have not? Are some remedies better suited to some countries than to other countries? What is affordable for developing countries? This booklet addresses these questions in order to help countries to: adopt education policies and practices targeted at girls from socially excluded groups, meet their Millennium Development Goals for Education, and achieve the social and economic benefits of girls' education.

The booklet begins by reviewing the evidence on socially excluded girls, noting that some girls remain out of school in all regions, with the vast majority of these coming from "socially excluded" groups: tribal, linguistic, ethnic, rural, or poor groups that are discriminated against in their own countries. While social exclusion creates barriers to education for both boys and girls, many of these barriers are higher for girls. These include discriminatory education policies and practices in schools, limited access to schools, weak quality and poor relevance of schools and curriculum, absence of pre-schools and compensatory programmes, and social and economic disincentives for parents to educate girls.

The booklet then reviews the evidence for a range of remedies, including ensuring a fair legal framework for education, increasing the absolute supply and accessibility of schools, improving school quality, eradicating subtle discrimination in classrooms and schools, making up for past inequity through compensatory programmes, and providing incentives for girls' education. It reviews the evidence for the effectiveness of such popular programmes as affirmative

action, gender segregated schools, community schools, pre-schools, tutoring, and conditional cash transfers.

The booklet concludes that simply raising the availability and quality of schools can help, but may not be sufficient. It notes that the most effective programmes are tailored to the specifics of socially excluded groups and of the countries themselves, and that programmes designed for targeting socially excluded girls require detailed demographic information that often is not available.

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Why focus on socially excluded girls?

Social exclusion can arise through long-term persecution (for example, via slavery or homeland dispossession) and through membership of certain identifiably different social and ethnic groups. This phenomenon creates barriers to education for children – and especially for girls.

Educating girls and young women promotes and enhances social and economic development, and enormous strides have been made in developing countries in the education of girls. But some girls in developing countries remain out of school. Of these, over 70 per cent come from “socially excluded” groups: tribal, linguistic, ethnic, rural, or poor groups that are discriminated against in their own countries (Lewis and Lockheed, 2007).

Social exclusion sidelines members of socially excluded groups, restricting their economic mobility and denying them benefits accorded to other members of society. Social exclusion arises from three main sources of stigma: (a) past trauma at the hands of a dominant or majority population, such as a recent history of slavery or dispossession of a homeland; (b) membership in ethnic groups that are differentiated by colour, language and religion; and (c) membership of groups that are assigned lower social status in their country, such as that accorded to lower castes in countries with caste systems (Horowitz, 1985; Meerman, 2005). In many countries and cultures, all girls and women hold lower social status than all boys and men.

Social exclusion creates barriers to education for both boys and girls, but many of these barriers are higher for girls, so that girls in socially excluded groups often suffer from a double disadvantage. Countries will require increased attention to policies targeted at girls from these groups if they are to meet their Millennium Development Goals for Education and to achieve the social and economic benefits of girls' education.

Incidence and variability across countries

There is only a limited amount of accurate numerical information about the incidence and nature of socially excluded girls and the levels of educational disadvantage that they experience. However, available data suggest that, in comparison with boys, large numbers of socially excluded girls have much poorer enrolment, attendance, and completion rates for basic education.

Socially excluded groups are found in countries in all regions, but accurate international figures on the numbers of girls from socially excluded groups who are out of school are generally unavailable. Lewis and Lockheed (2006) estimated that 70 per cent of all girls who were out of primary school in 2000 came from socially excluded groups. This share has undoubtedly increased, given the continued progress in girls' education observed over the past decade. The most recent data available report that 39 million girls were out of primary school in 2006, for a minimum of 27 million girls from socially excluded groups who were not attending primary school in that year (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2008). Many more were not attending secondary school, but exact numbers are not known. The largest absolute numbers of socially excluded girls who are out of school come from countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia: about 24 million in all. This presents an enormous challenge to

countries in these regions. By comparison, while virtually all the girls who are not in school in Latin America come from socially excluded groups, the absolute numbers are very small and the challenge is significantly less.

A few household surveys in developing countries provide more specific information. These show that, within countries, girls from socially excluded groups are less likely to have ever enrolled in school or to be currently attending school, and they complete fewer years of school than either boys from socially excluded groups or children from “majority” groups. Household surveys in several countries find that the share of “minority” girls in school is smaller than the share for “minority” boys. For example: in Guatemala 54 per cent of 7-year-old indigenous girls are in school, compared with 71 per cent of indigenous boys; in India, 35 per cent of tribal girls aged 15 are in school, compared with 60 per cent of tribal boys; in Laos, 48 per cent of rural Hmong-lu Mien girls aged 6-11 are in school, compared with 66 per cent of rural Hmong-lu Mien boys (Lewis and Lockheed, 2007).

When these gender gaps within socially excluded groups are combined with the gaps arising from social exclusion alone, the differences in school participation between socially excluded girls and majority children can be stark: in Nigeria, Hausa-speaking girls aged 6-10 had a 36 per cent lower probability of attending school compared with Yoruba-speaking boys; in Sri Lanka, Tamil (minority) girls aged 9-11 were 10 per cent less likely to be in school than Sinhalese (majority) boys the same age; in Vietnam, non-Kinh (minority) girls aged 6-18 were 22 per cent less likely to be enrolled in school as compared with Kinh (majority) boys the same age; in India, tribal girls had a 9 per cent lower probability of attending school compared with non-tribal boys (Arunatilake, 2006; Nguyen, 2006; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2005).

Governments with good information about socially excluded groups, such as Chile, Guatemala, India, Mexico, South Africa, and Vietnam, have been able to use this information to target additional support to their communities, families, and the schools these children attend. Careful targeting

reduces wastage and improves effectiveness and efficiency in the use of resources for education. Education ministries that lack information about population subgroups will need to establish the means for gathering such data on a regular basis.

Existing policies and practices often interfere with efforts to ensure that socially excluded girls enrol, attend, and complete basic education at the same rate as their male peers or majority-group classmates. Among the most important of these are discriminatory education policies and practices, limited access to schools, weak quality and poor relevance of schools and curriculum, discriminatory treatment in school, absence of pre-school and compensatory programmes, and social and economic disincentives for parents to educate girls. Social mobility varies across countries in the developed world. Generally, education improves job prospects for poor groups, although upward social mobility is more difficult for groups that are also otherwise socially marginalized, such as immigrant communities or ethnic minorities. Even among such groups though, education lowers poverty, but the returns to education may be smaller than for non-minority members due to discrimination.

Ensuring a fair legal framework for education

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- ***Legal frameworks that guarantee free basic education, non-discrimination, and affirmative action do not always improve educational opportunities for socially excluded girls.***
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A legal system that establishes and enforces the rights and entitlements of all citizens, clear mandates against discrimination, and affirmative action as appropriate are essential elements of a framework designed to ensure education for all. ***Legal guarantees of free basic education*** are a first step for ensuring that socially-excluded girls are not kept out of school, and the vast majority of countries in most regions have such guarantees (UNESCO, 2008). However, more than half (26) of the 45 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, where a large share of out-of-school girls reside, do not have these guarantees, and another 15 countries in the region charge fees for basic education, even though such fees are not legal (UNESCO, 2008). While fees can help offset some of the costs of providing education, they can also discourage school attendance, particularly among the poor, and poor families may selectively invest in the education of sons rather than daughters.

In some countries, ***anti-discrimination legislation***, which has been effective in such developed countries as Canada, New Zealand and the United States, may be appropriate. Many developing countries have such laws. In the 1950s, India passed anti-discrimination laws banning discrimination against those who were considered “untouchable” in the Hindu caste system, referred to now as Dalits. Many countries

in Latin America have anti-discrimination laws, although they are only weakly enforced (Lewis and Lockheed, 2006). In Europe, European Union legal agreements on ethnic minority rights have provided protection for the Roma (Ringold, Orenstein and Wilkens, 2003). And, perhaps most famously, in the early 1990s South Africa's discriminatory "apartheid" laws were struck down, ending a half century of legal racial segregation in schools.

In countries with past histories of discrimination, *affirmative action* can be helpful but can have negative consequences as well, as examples from Brazil, India, Malaysia, and South Africa show. In Brazil, the central government instituted quotas for "non-white" students in higher education in order to compensate for the lower scores on university entrance examinations obtained by such students graduating from public secondary schools as compared with the scores obtained by more advantaged (and typically "white") students graduating from better quality private secondary schools. This policy has been viewed by some as a threat to Brazil's identity as a harmonious multi-racial society (Skidmore, 2003). India has a quota system that reserves some 15 per cent of school places at all levels for "scheduled caste" members and another 7.5 per cent of places for "scheduled tribe" members, which was found to improve their status relative to higher castes. In higher education, however, these reserved places often remain unfilled (Boston and Nair-Reicheert, 2003; Galanter, 1991). In Malaysia, a long-standing affirmative action programme favouring ethnic Malays has increased their numbers in higher education and professional occupations, but has also contributed to ethnic segregation in education, such that few Chinese or Indian students – amounting to about one-third of the population – attend public primary schools (Lee, 2005). In South Africa, post-apartheid affirmative action in the labour market largely favoured black men, and was resisted as being "apartheid in reverse" (Adam, 1997).

4 Barriers from Policies and Administrative Rules

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- ***The administrative structures of school systems related to the official language of instruction, gender segregated schools, vocational and ability streaming, and pregnancy can represent major barriers to education for girls from minority groups.***
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Ministry of Education policies and administrative rules can have unintended discriminatory impacts on socially excluded girls. Particularly important barriers are policies and rules related to: language of instruction, gender-segregated schools, vocational and ability streaming, and pregnancy. Changes in these policies and rules can expand opportunities for socially excluded girls.

Rules imposing a ***national language of instruction*** for primary schools are detrimental for minority girls in countries where the practice of sequestering girls and women may mean they have little opportunity to learn a second national language before going to school. For example, Berber-language speaking girls in Morocco have few opportunities to learn Arabic before starting school. Similarly, Kurdish-speaking girls in Turkey have few opportunities to learn Turkish before starting school. Boys, who are less likely to be sequestered, may have the opportunity to learn a national language from the “street” or from their fathers, who may use the language for their work (Benson, 2005). Allowing primary schools to teach in a local language – as is the case in many Latin American countries with significant indigenous

populations, in India where mother-tongue instruction is an educational policy, and, more recently, in Morocco – increases opportunities for these girls. Bilingual education can also provide a bridge from mother-tongue instruction to instruction in a national language, but the success of these programmes is largely dependent upon finding high-quality bilingual teachers.

Some countries require that boys and girls attend *gender segregated schools*. If a village can afford to build only one school, this often means that girls have fewer opportunities for learning than do boys. Since many socially excluded groups live in small, remote villages that actually have only one school, mandated gender segregation is likely to have a larger impact on socially excluded girls. Interestingly, in Pakistan, which mandates single-sex education, parents in rural villages were willing to send their sons and daughters to private co-educational schools and to send their younger sons to their daughters' girls schools, which suggests that parents may be less concerned about co-education than are education authorities (Lewis and Lockheed, 2007).

Some countries have *separate vocational tracks for girls and boys* at the secondary level; often the girls' track prepares them for lower-paying occupations than does the boys' track. Since socially-excluded children are more likely to be enrolled in vocational programmes than academic programmes, this practice again places girls at a disadvantage. But this is not always the case. In India, lower caste boys pursued traditional "caste-appropriate" occupations in Marathi-language schools while lower caste girls were not able to do so. Instead, the girls enrolled in English-language schools, and benefitted in both labour and marriage markets, with better employment options, higher wages, and upward mobility through marriage into a higher caste (Munshi and Rosenzweig, 2006).

Administrative rules governing the rights of girls to remain in school during – or to return to school following – a *pregnancy* have been found in many countries. Often, these rules require expulsion from school. Thus, these rules mean that the girls are deprived of any opportunity for further

education, a penalty that is not imposed on the boys who are involved. Allowing girls to remain in school or providing a continuing education opportunity for them is one way schools can mitigate the impact of pregnancy on the girl's future education.

Education policies and administrative rules that have unintended consequences for socially excluded girls may be difficult to identify without specific studies. Such studies may be necessary. A first step in dealing with the consequences of biased policies is identifying them and tracking their impact on socially excluded girls.

Increasing access by expanding options for socially excluded girls: Supply matters

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- *Access to education for socially excluded girls can be improved by ensuring that:*
- *more schools are available close to*
- *girls' houses; greater opportunities are*
- *provided for access to alternative delivery*
- *systems (for example, non-formal school*
- *and distance education facilities); and*
- *educational environments are made*
- *more secure and more responsive to the*
- *requirements of girls.*

Increasing the supply of schools and school substitutes is important for reaching socially excluded girls, and this may require establishing new school places for those who are out of school. Distance to school is a significant barrier to girls' education in many countries, while schools located in the community enhance girls' school participation (Filmer, 2004). In Pakistan, having a school in the village increases the probability that girls aged 10-14 will enrol in school, and in rural areas of that country girls are less likely to drop out when the school is less than 2 kilometres from their home (Bilquees and Saquib, 2004; Lloyd, Mete and Grant, 2007). In Laos, girls are much more likely to enrol in a school located in the community than in one that is further away (King and van de Walle, 2007).

Ensuring that a school is located in a village may require the *construction of new schools*. Even though new school construction may not be targeted at girls or communities

of socially excluded groups, such construction may benefit them, as was the case in Indonesia, where a massive school construction programme halved the gender gap in educational attainment and significantly reduced the rural-urban gap (Duflo, 2000; Jayasundera, 2005). In India, a school construction and expansion programme targeted at districts with below-average female literacy rates had positive effects on the school enrolment of older girls (Jalan and Glinskaya, 2003).

Girls in particular also benefit from community primary schools, non-formal school programmes, and distance education at the secondary level, all of which have been found to increase their participation in school. **Community schools**, for which the community selects and supervises the teachers, have been successful in increasing girls' enrolments in India (Sipahimalani-Rao and Clarke, 2003). In sub-Saharan Africa, community schools have often arisen in response to the absence of government schools (Watt, 2001) and to growth in enrolments following the abolition of school fees (Riddell, 2003). Little is known about the impact of these schools on the enrolments of socially-excluded girls, but these schools have contributed to overall increases in school participation.

Non-formal schools, often targeted at girls and children from rural communities and operated by Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), have been remarkably effective in providing education to socially excluded children. A widely known example comes from Bangladesh, where schools operated by the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) have been operating for 30 years. BRAC schools provide a two- to three-year education that enables children to transfer into the formal system; over 70 per cent of the students in BRAC schools are girls and most of them successfully transfer (Rugh and Bossert, 1998). Bangladesh is one of the few developing countries to have reached gender parity at both primary and secondary education (UNESCO, 2008).

Distance education is another option to increase access for socially excluded girls. Interactive radio instruction, which

provides structured lessons in maths, national language, and science, has been applied effectively in primary schools in more than 20 countries. Because the instruction is delivered via radio, it can reach even remote rural communities of socially excluded children, and studies have shown that the children learn significantly more than students in schools with regular teachers (Bosch, 1997). At the secondary level, a programme in Mexico, Telesecundaria, established over 40 years ago, reaches over 1 million students in Grades 7-9 annually through television and the internet, providing access for children in rural communities that lack lower secondary schools. Three-quarters of the students who enter Grade 7 complete Grade 9 (Calderoni, 1998). The programme has been expanded to other countries in the region, with substantial adaptation in Guatemala, where many indigenous girls lack educational opportunities (Hall and Patrinos, 2006).

In some cases, *single-sex schools and more female teachers* provide safer and more secure options, particularly for girls in secondary school, although girls' schools may be less well resourced than schools for boys. For example, in rural Pakistan girls' schools were less likely to have water, electricity, or furniture as compared with boys' schools; and teachers in girls' schools were less educated and more likely to be absent than those in boys' schools (Lloyd, Mete and Grant, 2007). The effects of single-sex schools vary across countries. In Kenya, for example, girls in single-sex schools are less likely to be harassed by male teachers and classmates, and are therefore more likely to stay in school than girls in co-educational schools; by comparison, in Pakistan, where single-sex schools are mandated by law, communities' preferences for establishing schools for boys means that girls often lack any accessible school (Lloyd, Mete and Grant, 2007).

Improving schools for the socially excluded: Quality matters

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- ***Education participation rates for socially excluded girls are often reduced if schools have dilapidated physical facilities, less effective learning environments, and poor-quality instruction.***
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School quality affects whether girls enrol in school and how long they stay in school; keeping girls in school is as important as getting them there. Both the quality of the school's physical facilities and the quality of the instructional programme matter. Girls from socially excluded groups often attend schools that lack the basic inputs needed for learning – which drives away the poorest and lowers the general conditions of schooling for those who remain.

Schools attended by the rural poor suffer from having more *dilapidated physical facilities* than schools attended by urban students. For example, across 14 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, rural schools had less well-constructed buildings, electricity, water, toilets, and other facilities and equipment compared with urban schools (Zhang, 2006). Girls are more sensitive than boys to the quality of schools' physical facilities, and variations in quality affect the school enrolment and retention of girls from socially excluded groups. For example, in Pakistan, girls were more likely to stay in mixed-sex private schools, which had better physical facilities – water, toilet, electricity, furniture – than in single-sex government schools, which were more poorly resourced (Lloyd, Mete and Grant, 2007). In Laos, girls were more likely to be in school if it was a complete school, had

electricity, and did not have a leaky roof (King and van de Walle, 2007). In Mozambique, girls but not boys were more likely to enrol in schools that had more cement classrooms (Handa, 1999). In Indonesia, the presence of a toilet in the school was associated with higher maths scores for girls, but not for boys (Suryadarma, Suryahadi, Sumarto and Rogers, 2004).

Schools attended by poor and socially excluded children also suffer from *poor instructional quality*: lack of instructional materials, teacher absenteeism, instruction in an incomprehensible national or regional language, and teacher-centred pedagogy. In 14 countries in Africa, for example, rural schools had fewer instructional materials for reading and their teachers scored less well on a test of reading (Zhang, 2006). In Laos, rural schools serving language minority groups were less well provisioned than were rural schools serving the dominant Lao-Tai ethnic group. Better instructional quality may also advantage girls more than boys. In Pakistan, girls were less likely to drop out from schools where the teacher was present and lived in the community and where classes were smaller. In Egypt, girls were less likely to drop out from schools having a longer school day and a regular teacher, as compared with schools with multiple shifts and temporary teachers (Lloyd et al., 2003). In Kenya, the effects of school quality on girls' dropout rates from mixed-sex schools were mixed; girls were less likely to drop out from schools with more instructional materials and with teachers who reported that they considered mathematics important for girls, but were more likely to drop out from schools having more credentialed teachers; these factors were not associated with higher rates of boy's dropping out (Lloyd, Mensch and Clark, 2000).

Improving the quality – particularly the instructional quality – of schools serving socially excluded girls improves both participation and learning. In particular, evidence shows the positive effects of ensuring that basic inputs are available, aligning the language of instruction to that spoken at home for the youngest children, helping girls make the transition to a national language of instruction

through more and better reading materials, making the curriculum more accessible for socially excluded groups, and improving the quality of classroom pedagogy and teacher-student interaction. Extending the duration of the school day and year is also important for socially excluded girls.

Eradicating subtle discrimination in classrooms and schools

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- ***Discrimination against socially excluded girls may arise explicitly through teacher and student behaviours, and through certain aspects of classroom of management. It may also operate in more subtle ways via stereotyping in teaching materials and textbooks.***
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Excluded children often face *discrimination from teachers and classmates*, affecting their opportunity to learn. Girls from socially excluded groups may be seated far from the teacher, provided with fewer textbooks and other learning materials, and not encouraged to participate in classroom discussions. Regrettably, few studies have looked, specifically, at these sorts of classroom behaviours in developing countries. A few anecdotal reports suggest that the problem may be widespread. For example, in Yemen, primary school girls were typically seated at the rear of the classroom, far from the blackboard and the teacher (World Bank, 2003). In India, Dalit children may be ignored or even mistreated in class by their teachers and by their non-Dalit classmates.

Textbooks both ignore and reinforce stereotyped images of girls and minority groups. In some cases, ethnic minority groups are stigmatized in textbooks, leading to greater social exclusion (Heyneman and Todoric-Bebic, 2000). Ethnic minorities may also be underrepresented in textbooks in an attempt to promote social cohesion and national unity. Girls and women are depicted less frequently than boys and

men in textbooks from “countries at all levels of economic development and at all levels of gender equality” (Blumberg, 2007: 33). For example, only one-quarter of the illustrations of people in textbooks from countries as diverse as Kuwait, Peru, Singapore, and Zambia portrayed girls and women, the remaining three-quarters being images of boys and men, while even in newly revised textbooks in Turkey, girls and boys appear about equally, but illustrations of men outnumber women two to one (Esen, 2007; Mkuchu, 2004). Often when girls and women appear in textbooks, they are portrayed in traditional, domestic, or submissive roles relative to boys and men. For example, in West African secondary textbooks, men were three times as likely to appear in modern occupations as were women. In Kenya, women were represented entirely in domestic activities and in Tanzania, occupational stereotypes were observed in textbooks for primary school students, with twice as many men illustrated as women, working in twice as many occupations (Mkuchu, 2004). In China, occupational and personality gender stereotypes were found in elementary level textbooks for all grades and subjects (Blumberg, 2007).

Efforts to eliminate bias and stereotypes in textbooks have moved slowly and often only in response to external forces (Blumberg, 2007). However, establishing criteria for identifying gender and ethnic bias in textbooks, and choosing representative committees to review textbook illustrations and content can be effective.

8 Making up for past inequity: Compensatory programmes help

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- ***Compensatory education and tutoring programmes that compliment normal schooling, and are targeted towards poor and disadvantaged groups, can be of great assistance to boys and girls from socially excluded groups.***
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Parental support for education contributes to better learning. However, poorer households often are unable to provide the types of support needed, such as: books in the home, educational study aids like a study desk or table for the student's use, and early home literacy activities such as playing with alphabet toys or reading aloud to children. To compensate for the effects of poverty on home learning resources, many countries have established compensatory programmes. These targeted, tailored programmes for socially excluded children are essential to complement overall schooling investments and include programmes for pre-school children, in-school programmes, and after-school programmes.

Pre-school programmes that help new mothers and also provide health and nutrition interventions can improve their children's readiness for school. Programmes held in homes or education centres that offer early childhood enrichment and work closely with disadvantaged mothers are significantly more successful than programmes that offer only custodial care for children. Home-based programmes that provide day-care, nutrition, and educational services have been found to boost disadvantaged children's school readiness. In India, early childhood education centres

for poor girls helped boost their subsequent retention in primary school.

In-school tutoring programmes for children who are falling behind have boosted their achievement, enabling them to catch up with their classmates. In India, a programme that hires female high school graduates to serve as tutors for poor-performing students in second and third grades raised the targeted children's test scores significantly.

After-school tutoring for disadvantaged children has also raised school enrolments, reduced repetition and drop-outs, and boosted test scores. However, after-school tutoring can be a problem when it provides incentives for teachers to teach less during normal school hours – teaching for fewer hours and covering less of the curriculum – or when it incurs heavy costs on lower income families (Bray, 1996). After-school tutoring programmes need to be implemented with caution to avoid these negative consequences.

Incentives for girls' education to offset costs and reward attendance

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- ***Well-targeted financial incentives, scholarships, and feeding programmes have been shown to improve the participation and educational achievement of girls from socially excluded groups.***
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Socially excluded groups are typically among the poorest households in a country. These households also may not view an educated daughter as an asset, and the direct and indirect costs of her schooling may be an additional barrier. Thus, incentives to send girls to school may be necessary. Research shows that *conditional cash transfers*, scholarships, and even the opportunity to win a scholarship have boosted girls' learning and kept girls from poor families in school. In countries with relatively few socially excluded girls, incentive systems may be feasible.

Girls have benefitted from public programmes that offset the direct costs of schooling. Brazil's Bolsa Escola, which provided transfers to the poorest families on the condition that children in the household maintained school attendance, raised attendance and lowered dropout rates for these children. In Mexico, the *Oportunidades* programme provided grants to families that continued to send their daughters to school and has been successful in attracting female dropouts back to school. In Bangladesh, a Food for Education programme for poor households, contingent on school participation, boosted girls' enrolment and attendance.

Scholarship programmes for girls have also boosted their school participation and achievement. Scholarships compensate families for the direct and indirect costs of education, and are effective for families that view cost as an impediment to girls' schooling. Girls' scholarship programmes have attracted girls into schools and kept them there in Bangladesh and Kenya.

School feeding programmes have also proved effective in raising school attendance of the poor in countries where enrolment and attendance rates were low, but not in countries such as Colombia, Jamaica and the Philippines where enrolment and attendance rates were high (Levinger, 1986).

10

Conclusion

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- ***Girls from socially excluded groups face many challenges in seeking to participate and succeed in education.***
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- ***Improved schooling conditions and well-targeted assistance programmes can help these girls to stay in school and to succeed.***
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In countries with many socially excluded groups and high levels of ethnic, linguistic, economic and social diversity, girls from socially excluded groups are at a disadvantage educationally. Raising the availability and quality of schools for the socially disadvantaged in such countries will reduce much of this gender gap. In addition, compensatory programmes designed for and targeted at socially excluded girls will be required.

Targeting requires good information about the groups to be targeted. In some countries, this information is available through household surveys or an annual school census. Geographical targeting is suitable when socially excluded groups live in their own, often isolated, communities and can be identified through language, as is the case in Cambodia, Guatemala, Laos and Vietnam. Targeting programmes directed to girls in rural, poor ethnic enclaves could boost their school participation. However, targeting socially excluded girls in urban areas may be more difficult because sensitivity regarding ethnic identification may arise, as in the case of Brazil.

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