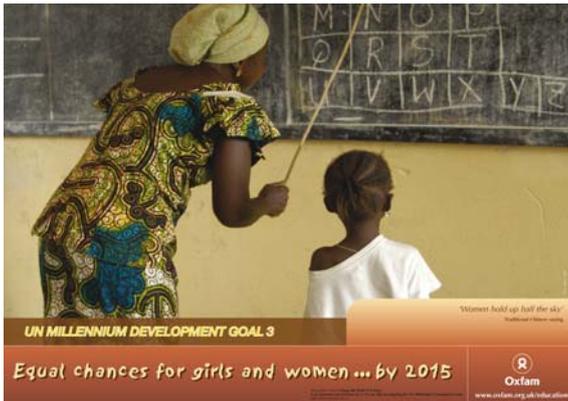


Millennium Development Goals

Millennium Development Goal 3 – To promote gender equality and empower women

Information and activities



Target – Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

Women and girls play vital roles within families and in society as a whole – yet they remain subject to discrimination on social, political and legal levels. While many women have started to realise their potential, there are still huge barriers to overcome.

Many women suffer the disadvantages of gender inequality right from birth. For example, it is still the case in some countries that parents' preferential treatment of male children means that infant girls are less likely to survive.

In many countries, particularly lower-income ones, girls are more likely to drop out of school and to receive less education than boys because of discrimination or household obligations. Overall, women are much less likely to get good jobs than men or to be elected onto committees or into parliaments and national assemblies. There is a lot to do before women all around the world have the opportunities and support they need to play a bigger role in society.

Activities for this goal include

Liberia case study

Information about a girl in Liberia whose education is helping her to claim a better future.

Can Jaya stay at school?

Role-play activity about a girl who might have to drop out of school.

Education survey

Pupils carry out a survey to help them think about education and gender in their own country.

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Progress has been made in reducing the number of girls not in school, but there is still a long way to go. For every 100 boys out of school worldwide there are 132 girls, and in some countries the gender gap is much wider. For example, for every 100 boys out of school in India, there are 426 girls.¹ There are also problems with girls staying in school: worldwide, only 66 per cent of girls completed their primary school education in 2004, compared with 76 per cent of boys.²

Overall, women are much less likely to get good jobs than men, or to be elected onto committees or to parliaments and national assemblies. Doors are slowly opening for women in the labour market, with women's participation in paid, non-agricultural employment increasing. However, women's labour is still more likely to be unpaid than men's, leading to low job security and a lack of social protection. Giving women the opportunities and support they need to play a bigger role in society will benefit families, economies and whole societies.

¹ *Global Monitoring Report 2007*, UNESCO

² Education Statistics (EdStats), www.worldbank.org/

Mary's story – Liberia

On this poster, five-year-old Mary Kolleh is being taught the alphabet by Ophelia M G Williams, at Yawerlee Elementary School in Liberia.

Liberia is recovering from more than ten years of civil war, which has left many people desperately poor and vulnerable. In 2006 its new president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, became Africa's first elected female leader. In order to help rebuild the nation her government is particularly encouraging girls to go to school. However, girls face special challenges. They often have to work to support their families, and early marriage, teenage pregnancies and a bias in favour of boys often mean that they have to leave school early. In an atmosphere where sexual violence and exploitation remain serious problems, they risk contracting HIV.



Poster activity (ages 9–14)

1. Ask pupils to look very carefully at the photograph and then describe what they see in detail.
2. Read the case study, Mary's story – Liberia, to them, explaining any difficult words. Read it to them again, and ask them to take notes.
3. Ask them the following questions:
 - What special challenges do girls who want to go to school face in Liberia?
 - What benefits will Mary and her family gain if she finishes primary and perhaps secondary education?
 - Are these challenges and benefits the same for girls all around the world?

If Mary has the chance to finish her primary education, and even go to secondary school, she, her family and her community will benefit greatly. Her earning power will increase, as will her influence in the workplace; her children will be more likely to be healthy; and she will be likely to live longer and to survive childbirth. Put simply, educating girls is fundamental to overcoming poverty and gender inequality.

The Liberian government was able to abolish school fees for primary schools in 2007 because rich countries cancelled some of their debts. However, more funding is needed so that children like Mary can achieve their potential.

Activity 3.1

Aim

- To get pupils to think about why some girls cannot go to school.

You will need

- One copy of the role-play cards on page 3 for each group of four pupils

Can Jaya stay at school? (ages 7–14)

1. With the class working in groups of four pupils, give each group one set of the role-play cards. Ask each of them to take on a part and devise a drama based on their roles. Jaya and her family live in the Punjab in Pakistan. The pupils can elaborate on their roles if they wish. Each group should decide what happens next. Some groups could find a way in for Jaya to stay at school, whereas others could develop a storyline in which she has to leave.
2. Ask the groups to perform their dramas to each other. Freeze-frame each drama just before and just after the decision is made about what happens next. How does each of the characters feel? At the end, place one of the characters in a 'hot seat'. Other members of the class can then ask this person questions about the motives for their actions.
3. Finally, for each group, discuss with the class how Jaya managed to stay at school or why she did not manage to stay at school. For dramas where Jaya had to leave, what would have needed to happen for her to stay at school?

Activity 3.2

Aim

- To enable pupils to practise their skills in persuasive writing while reinforcing their knowledge and understanding of education and gender issues.

Let her go to school! (ages 8–14)

Note: This activity follows on from Activity 3.1.

1. Ask pupils to imagine that Jaya's parents are still making the decision about Jaya's education. Write a letter from Fatima to Kesro and Razia in which she tries to persuade them that Jaya should stay at school.
2. Discuss with the class the appropriate language for persuasive writing, for example the use of repetition, or persuasive phrases such as 'I really think you should...', 'Is there really no other way?', 'I feel really strongly that...'. The letter could also include some possible ways in which Jaya's parents could keep her at school.

Can Jaya stay at school?

FATHER

You are Jaya's father, Kesro. You have three children: two boys and a girl, Jaya. You work hard as a day labourer in a factory to earn enough money for them all to go to school, but lately you have found it more difficult to get work and you can no longer afford the school fees for all your children. You think education is less important for women because they usually only go to work in the fields or stay at home as housewives. Obviously Jaya must drop out of school. The boys will continue their education so that they can get jobs and be able to contribute to the household. Jaya will get married and be looked after by her husband, so education is less important for her.

JAYA

You are Jaya, a 12-year-old girl. You have been at school for five years. You work very hard and have been top of your class several times. You enjoy school and have made lots of friends there. You really want to be a teacher when you are older. You think that it's unfair that you might have to drop out of school while your two brothers can continue their education. Also you have to spend more time on household chores than they do and yet must still fit in doing your homework.

MOTHER

You are Jaya's mother, Razia. You have three children: two boys and a girl, Jaya. You had no education yourself and are pleased that Jaya has been to school for a few years. You hope that this will mean that she is able to get work when she grows up. However, your main concern is that she should get married. This is the most important thing. You also worry that if Jaya continues with her education she may not have so much time to help with the household chores.

AUNT

You are Jaya's aunt, Fatima. You are married and have two children. You were lucky enough to have completed your education and you have worked in an office since your last child went to school six years ago. This has meant that you could afford to send all your children to school. You understand that it is really important for both girls and boys to be educated. Girls with an education can help to provide financially for the household. Nowadays, they can even become civil servants or MPs. They can also contribute to their own children's education at home themselves.

Activity 3.3

Aims

- To encourage pupils to think critically about education and gender.
- To enable them to empathise with a girl living in difficult circumstances in Kenya.

You will need

- A copy of *An opinion from Kenya* below to refer to.

Do boys deserve education more than girls? (ages 8–14)

1. Education for all is a right. (See Activity 2.3 on Poster 2 about rights.) However, it is often much harder for girls to gain an education than boys. Read *An opinion from Kenya* (below) to the class.
2. Ask pupils to draw two columns and head them 'Maria's view of girls' education' and 'Maria's view of boys' education'. In the first column, they should list the ways in which Maria thinks it is hard for girls to get an education. In the second column they should list the ways in which she thinks it is easier for boys.
3. Discuss the results as a class. Can pupils think of any other ways in which it might be harder for girls to gain an education than boys? Is there any evidence in Maria's story that Climate Change might be affecting girls' education in Kibera? Do pupils think that Maria's opinion would be true for every family?

An opinion from Kenya

Maria has lived all her life in Kibera, a slum in Nairobi, Kenya. She has all the usual household chores to perform, but still manages to go to school. Her ambition is to stay there, and eventually to work with computers. 'Sometimes parents don't seem interested in their daughters being at school, so they don't pay much attention to what we do. They say girls are not the same as boys. Girls get married and don't contribute to the family income. Boys get work and help provide for the family. We know that nowadays many girls do help with family expenses, but the feeling is still there amongst parents that a girl's education is less important. 'I think education for girls is important, because without a school certificate there's no job at all. But often it is harder for girls as they don't have time for revision. A girl is always being sent for water, sent to the shop, sent to wash dishes, sent here and there, while a boy sits revising. Girls can't even do their homework. When we try, we are disturbed. **You know there is a shortage of water in Kibera. Girls are sent to find it, however far they have to go. Boys never willingly collect water.**'

Activity 3.4

Aim

- To encourage pupils to think about gender and education in the UK.

Education survey (ages 11–14)

1. Tell pupils to carry out a survey in the school about the educational differences between boys and girls. Do boys and girls choose different subjects? Does either gender get better exam results? Ask them to find out if there is a difference in the subjects studied for GCSE and A level. They could also do a survey of teachers in the school. Are there subjects that are mainly taught by men or mainly taught by women? Get them to interview teachers to find out why they think there is a difference.
2. Discuss the pupils' findings with them. Discuss the idea of expectations for girls and boys. How do girls and boys see the roles played by men and women? Do they think men and women have equal opportunities? Does this change after women have children? Do men and women's roles reflect their success (or lack of it) at school?

Success Stories

With the support of the World Bank¹, the Bangladeshi government launched a national project aimed at improving girls' educational attainment through dedicated stipends. The Bangladesh Female Secondary School Assistance Project I and II first ran from 1994 to 2001 and was so successful that the government ran a second programme from 2002 to 2008. Girls' enrolment in secondary school in Bangladesh jumped from 1.1 million in 1991 to 3.9 million in 2005. The project was especially successful at reaching and including girls from disadvantaged and remote areas.

¹ Adapted from: *The World Bank, International Development Association "Stipends Help Triple Girls' Access to School in Bangladesh": <http://go.worldbank.org/RRBXNQ0NX0>*

How To Take Action

Read the success story above and discuss with pupils how people can influence governments when it comes to helping developing countries meet MDG 3. After the lesson some students may want to try and do something about the issues raised. These are some suggestions for action students could take.

Actions

- Hold a “Human Rights Day” event on 10th December, with gender equality as the focus.
- Hold an International Women’s day event on 8th March.
<http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/women/womday>
- Present assembly with girls/boys dilemma. For example what if a girl was brilliant at football but wasn’t allowed to join the school team (boys only)? What if all the girls were given £5 or sweets and the boys not?
- Invite some female leaders into school and interview them. They could be a Headteacher, a company executive, the head of an NGO, a Guide leader.

Fundraisers

- Organise a girls’ sporting tournament and charge an entrance fee.

NB Please remember to pass on stories of any actions you or your pupils take. education@oxfam.org.uk

For more resources about Gender equality try:

www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/developing_rights

www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/climate_change_poverty_women

Oxfam is committed to providing the best possible support to schools and youth groups and we wish to assess the impact of our work with young people.

Please use the slip below to tell us about your MDG lessons and projects or e-mail us at education@oxfam.org.uk

.....✂️.....

Name of Teacher:

Age of pupils:

Name & Address of School:

Description of MDG learning:

Postcode:

Please return this slip to:

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Oxfam Youth & Schools Team

Oxfam House

Number of pupils taught about the MDGs:

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