

## Activity 2: Girls' education in Pakistan

### Learning objectives

- To identify the barriers to education facing children in Pakistan and to differentiate between the barriers faced by girls and by boys.
- To assess the impact of these barriers by looking at education statistics from Pakistan.
- To write a report or make a presentation prioritising the actions needed to improve access to education in Pakistan.

### Resources

- [Video: Dunya Aur Larki \("The World and the Girl"\)](#) (4min 8sec)
- Activity Sheet: Pakistan education statistics, photocopied and cut in half (one half-sheet per young person)

**Time required:** 60 mins

Pakistan faces severe challenges in providing all its children with an education. Recent statistics suggest that 7.3 million, or one in three, of Pakistan's children do not attend school.

### Introduction: What prevents girls from going to school? (20 mins)

- Begin by showing the animated film *Dunya Aur Larki* ("The World and the Girl"). Ask the young people to identify and list all the barriers that the girl faces as she seeks a school place.
- Ask the young people to feed back their ideas. They may describe these barriers in different terms but the list should include the following:
  - Gender stereotyping of girls, originating from male elders but initially implemented by the mother.
  - Girls being kept at home and given chores to do (social confinement).
  - Long distances from home to school.
  - Lack of access to public transport, particularly for poor families.
  - Violence and conflict destroying schools (caused by a fragile state).<sup>1</sup>
  - Natural disasters (for example, flooding) destroying schools.
  - "Eve-teasing" (sexual harassment) in the street.<sup>2</sup>
  - Poor school infrastructure: schools lack classrooms and facilities.
  - Lack of equipment.
  - Lack of water and sanitation.
  - The national education budget is low compared with other budgets.
  - Inequality.

<sup>1</sup> "A fragile state is a low-income country characterised by weak state capacity and/or weak state legitimacy, leaving citizens vulnerable to a range of shocks" (Wikipedia).

<sup>2</sup> A term used in South Asia to denote "the making of unwanted sexual remarks or advances by a man to a woman [or girl] in a public place" ([Oxford Living Dictionaries](#)).

- Ask the young people to divide the list into these two groups:
  - Barriers to education that affect girls.
  - Barriers to education that affect both girls and boys.
- Lead a class discussion about the young people’s ideas. Their responses may be quite nuanced, so try to draw out these subtleties in the discussion. For example, the gender stereotyping of girls affects girls exclusively. In comparison, a lack of water and sanitation in schools may affect girls disproportionately because of menstruation, but it also affects boys to some extent. However, a teacher without equipment affects boys and girls more or less equally.

### How could access to education in Pakistan be improved? (30 mins)

- Give each young person a copy of the activity sheet showing the Pakistani education statistics. The statistics are listed twice on the sheet, so that you can save paper by cutting or tearing the photocopied sheets in half. Discuss the extent to which the content of the film is supported by or reflected in the statistics. Can the statistics be used to back up any issues raised by the film, or vice versa? Match the relevant statistics to the list of barriers to education.
- Divide the class into groups of three or four. Tell the young people to have a short discussion about how access to education in Pakistan could be improved and to decide on the five best ways to achieve this. They should then write a short report or make a presentation to explain these priorities. They may differentiate between measures to be taken by Pakistan’s government, by its civil society and by its donors. Explain the roles of these bodies to them, using the information in the table below.

Pakistan’s government	The government has overall responsibility for what happens within the country’s borders: it collects taxes, decides on government spending, invests in public services (for example by building schools and training teachers) and implements the law. However, violence and conflict reduce the effectiveness of the government, and Pakistan is frequently referred to as a “fragile state”.
Pakistan’s civil society	This term covers citizens who act together to make a difference; for example, grassroots campaigns for better education, campaigns for girls’ and women’s rights or community support for schools and teachers (parent–teacher associations, fundraising bodies, supplementary classes, etc).
Pakistan’s donors	These are rich countries with aid programmes. They provide additional funds to the Ministry of Education, give funding to NGOs with education programmes and target specific groups for help – for example, girls or children from rural areas.

The issue of the role of **donors** and **international development aid** may arise. In Pakistan's case this is a difficult and complex question. Pakistan, and many other countries, spend well below the UN target of 6% of GDP on education. This target suggests that these countries can afford to spend a much larger slice of their national incomes on education but decide not to. Therefore, should donors step in under these circumstances and provide aid for education? The precise answer to this question may depend on a range of factors outside the scope of this resource and related to the fragility of the Pakistani state, but the general question is worth discussing.

- Ask one or two groups (more if time permits) to make their presentations or read their reports to the class.
- Bring the class together to discuss the presentations.
  - To what extent do they agree on what the priorities should be?
  - How complex is the challenge of providing education for all?
  - Is education for all merely about spending more money on schools, or does success also rest on wider social change?
  - How does change happen?

### Plenary discussion (5–10 mins)

- Do the young people think there is any reason why the film is called “The World and the Girl”? For example, it could have been called “School and the Girl”. Does the title say anything about the barriers to education and how to overcome them?

Points to discuss:

- There are social barriers to girls' education – for example, sexual harassment and attitudes to girls' rights, or the priority given to boys' education. The barriers to education go beyond a shortage of classrooms and teachers.
- The political environment is also sometimes hostile to education, involving conflict, violence and insecurity. How can “fragile states” provide education for all?
- Overcoming barriers is therefore about more than providing school places, textbooks and teachers. It requires bigger social and political changes.

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**Activity Sheet****Pakistan education statistics**

Total population:	196 million
Number of children out of primary school:	7.3 million (one in three)
% of children in primary school:	66%
% of primary school pupils who are girls:	44%
Number of students per teacher:	41
Public spending on education:	2% of GDP (the UN target is 6%)
Primary school completion rate:	67%
Secondary school enrolment rate:	37%

Source: [www.sendmyfriend.org](http://www.sendmyfriend.org) 2014

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