



**Notes from  
2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report:  
A Review of the Main Gender  
And Inclusion Issues**

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## **1. Introduction: the GMR Analysis**

The GMR is a comprehensive document and covers a wide range of countries and situations. It does attempt a difficult task – to provide an overview illustrated with specific cases. However, the picture which emerges does give many clear signals concerning the issues and the solutions encountered. What is striking about the analysis is not that a great deal of new information emerges. The challenges are not so much in the finding of new solutions but in the successful implementation of known strategies and the creation of pressure on governments to provide what they signed up to in Dakar in 2000. The analysis is particularly helpful where it deals with hard data. The tables and figures are very welcome.

## **2. Overview of findings from the GMR**

### **2.1. ECCE**

- GMR of 2007 made ECCE a prominent issue in relation to children's health, nutrition and educational development as well as in terms of addressing aspects of poverty and disadvantage
- ECCE still not a priority in SSA: interventions mainly urban-based and NGO/CBO driven
- Some countries in LA and E Asia have taken up the challenge
- Most countries with ECCE policies have concentrated on pre-primary education; some have tried to universalize, others to focus on disadvantaged groups
- Integrated programs for young children have shown the greater benefits
- Where countries like Mexico have introduced compulsory pre-primary financial and logistical problems have resulted in quality concerns
- Where expansion of ECCE has occurred the focus has generally been on the older child to the neglect of the younger ones: programs are rarely comprehensive and are often fragmentary

### **2.2. Primary Education**

- Only about one third of countries have reached gender parity in primary & secondary education (mainly advanced countries): low rates in SSA, S and W Asia & Arab states
- Gender disparities still high at tertiary levels: 63% of countries with data have parity at primary, 37% at secondary and 3% at tertiary
- Another 12% close to parity at primary level
- Issues include unsafe school environments, teacher attitudes & practices, biased curricula and textbooks; fields of study still determined largely by gender
- Gender disparities in access improved between 1999 and 2005 although some countries remain far behind (Afghanistan CAR, Chad, Niger, Pakistan, and Yemen). Boys under-represented in some countries with generally low enrolment rates like the Gambia, Ghana, Iran, Malawi etc.
- Greatest progress towards gender parity found in S & W Asia: next comes SSA: progress slowed in Arab States
- Worldwide 118 of 188 countries with data had achieved gender parity in primary education by 2005: many others have made progress but the female GER was still only 80% or less of the male enrolment in 5 SSA countries as well as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen, many of which are fragile states
- Gender disparities found among poorer, rural populations or urban slum-dwellers; LA & Caribbean disparities are more to do with socio-economic factors & ethnicity

- Girls tend to progress better in school than boys although female repetition is more prevalent in SSA and the Arab States where boys dominate enrolments anyway. Girls do not repeat more than boys in LA and the Caribbean or NA and Western Europe.
- Survival rates are virtually the same for boys and girls to the last grade of primary. However, in many countries school survival rates are better for girls. In SSA and Arab states there are roughly the same number of countries with gender gaps favouring boys as with girls

### **2.3. Secondary education**

- Gender disparities are greater in secondary and higher education but are more complex: disparities favouring girls and boys are roughly the same but boys' underachievement is a growing problem
- The world GPI is up from 0.91 in 1999 to 0.94 in 2005: slow down since Dakar in comparison to 1991-99
- SSA has seen a rise in gender disparity; with S & W Asia this region has seen low secondary enrolments with the lowest levels of girls' enrolment
- In LA and Caribbean very low rates of boys' participation in secondary
- Overall progress towards gender parity in a large majority of countries: countries furthest behind showed significant progress (e.g. Benin, Cambodia, Chad, the Gambia etc)

### **2.4. Tertiary Education**

- Gender disparities are the norm at this level: many more women than men enrolled worldwide except in SSA and S & W Asia
- Women's position did deteriorate in several countries between 1999 and 2005: less gendered choice of subjects in tertiary needed

### **2.5. Access, equity and inclusion**

- Access to primary education is often restricted by lack of classrooms; successful recruitment campaigns create additional pressure for places
- Many countries have increased capacity with new buildings and by using existing structures more effectively
- Countries like Ethiopia and Tanzania have invested in more school buildings and the dropping of school fees but enrolments have grown faster than capacity and quality has declined
- More economical buildings, multi-grade classes and satellite schools have been introduced to increase access in some countries
- Strategies for raising funding levels have included earmarked taxes and private contributions; Turkey has provided tax incentives for such contributions
- Making local communities responsible for financing capital and some recurrent costs has also been the strategy of some governments
- Rural poverty remains an issue in access: urban migration puts pressure on city schools and poor rural populations cannot pay for schooling
- Strategies to reduce repetition and drop-out remain important
- The national picture is not necessarily a uniform one: regional variations may be great in access and quality. These disparities may have increased within a general picture of national success.

- Governments may target spending and support to the most disadvantaged areas; introducing district-level planning and earmarking special funds have also been used.
- Much progress has been made in the abolition of school fees to increase equity and access; some 38 countries do not yet constitutionally guarantee free and compulsory education although 14 countries abolished fees between 2000 and 2006. Enrolments usually improve when this is done, especially for girls and OVCs. Political leadership, phased introduction and integration of fee abolition within a sectoral reform are key factors in this issue as are careful planning and teacher recruitment.
- Where fee-freedom is not implemented some governments provide other incentives for the poor and vulnerable such as scholarships and cash transfer schemes. These are essential if inequalities in access and retention are to be overcome.
- Improving gender parity through special programs and advocacy and addressing the issue of child labour are important access issues. Combining school work and family agricultural responsibilities is a common issue but more exploitative forms of child labour need to be tackled as well. Legal constraints on the age at which children may work have been introduced in many countries but this is difficult to enforce where poverty is the main reason for children to work. Flexible schooling and equivalency courses help as do transition courses to get children back into school. Most programs are small scale including cash compensation strategies and they need to be buttressed with other initiatives.
- Ethnic discrimination in schools is a further access and equity issue. Language of instruction, appropriate resources and adequately trained teachers are problematic areas: nomadic children and indigenous minorities are particularly vulnerable and poor quality may characterize provision made for them
- Within the EU there are high drop-out and repetition rates for minorities and immigrant groups.
- Exclusion of the disabled remains an issue despite strong international agreements and conventions; however, the concept of inclusion has become increasingly accepted although poorer countries have difficulty in implementing such a policy

## **2.6. Quality in education**

This section of the GMR initially focuses on learning outcomes as a measure of quality noting that international comparative measures have inherent weaknesses in that they frequently centre on performance in language and mathematics to the neglect of ‘subjects’ and such issues as values and culture. Whatever their weaknesses such measures do show low achievement levels world-wide, especially in developing countries. It comes as no surprise that children from better off homes do better and that home variables are very significant in pupil achievement.

The quality section goes on to state that bad behaviour in school is linked to poor performance, urban students generally do better than rural pupils, time on task affects performance positively as does time in school. Actual time spent on learning has an effect on achievement it is stated. The materials and resources available also influence pupil achievement and national assessments generally reflect the findings of international assessments. Of the 15 countries selected for a table to demonstrate improvements in learning outcomes 8 show an improvement, 3 remain much as they were and 4 varied in their performance. The remainder of the section carries the same kind of familiar messages: textbook availability is critical, a secure classroom environment helps pupil achievement, more and better qualified teachers are good for pupils but contract teachers

may not be. Internationally, overall pupil/teacher ratios have remained much the same since Dakar.

This section of the GMR largely reinforces what is already known and gives few indications of how the quality issues may be overcome. That political will and commitment demonstrated by appropriate policies and adequate funding are the key factors in all EFA endeavours is hardly mentioned.

## **2.7. Financing EFA: Domestic and External Resources**

As an introduction to this section of the GMR it is worth referring to a paper prepared by Birger Fredriksen<sup>1</sup> of the World Bank for initial meetings of the Education Program Development Fund, a joint donor trust fund to be managed by the World Bank. Fredriksen makes the following statements in his paper:

- *The evolution over the last few years in education financing – in terms of both the increase in total funding available (external and especially domestic) and modalities of providing external aid (e.g. the move towards budget support, creation of the FTI partnership and associated financial instruments) – is probably more far-reaching than anything seen in this area over the last several decades. This is particularly the case for SSA but may also apply to domestic education financing in countries such as India... (page 1)*
- *The 2007 EFA GMR notes a major increase in Official Development Assistance commitments for education between 1999 and 2004. For SSA the increase was 52% or 8.7% annually.*
- *The (financial) follow up to Dakar has still been quite remarkable compared to that following the 1990 Jomtien conference*
- *Over the 1999-2004 period domestic education funding grew at almost the same level as external funding ... **domestic funding accounts for by far the largest share of total education funding***

Turning to the GMR it must be said that the chapter on financing is among the best prepared and presented sections of the report. It is comprehensive and detailed and only the most prominent issues will be discussed here. First, the report states that many governments devote only a small share of GDP and total government expenditure to education and many still require households to make significant contributions to the schooling of their children. There has been slow progress in dealing with 'waste' in educational budgets and accountability is still lacking in many countries. Oddly, the report states that 'too many donors give priority to post-primary education'. This assertion needs further attention as the complaint from most SSA countries at least is that the donors have neglected post-primary for years. The GMR goes on to state that too much ODA goes to middle income countries and that the benefits of debt relief for the poorest will now be reduced. Not all donors support SWAs and donor/government cooperation varies with the weakest countries receiving least support. The effect of foreign financial aid is generally positive but aid to education is less effective than it is thought to be.

As Fredriksen suggests above, governments remain the most important source of funding. Data sources are limited and often lack detail but the GMR states that this situation is improving. There are great variations in countries' share of GDP going to education, and great variations within regions. Of 105 countries outside North America and Western Europe 26 gave 6% or

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<sup>1</sup> EPDF Task Force: Report and Recommendations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo, Norway, March 2007.

above to education and 24 provided 3% or less with the remainder in between. Level of GDP committed to education is a proxy for general commitment to the education enterprise and the tables in this chapter provide a very varied picture.

In SSA and South and West Asia there are encouraging signs of increased government levels of expenditure. Across the levels of education, spending presents an interesting picture. Broadly speaking low income countries devote half their expenditure to primary, 28% to secondary and 16%-20% to tertiary education. High income countries devote 25% of education expenditure to primary, 34-40% to secondary and 22% to tertiary. Expenditure per pupil (or unit costs) varies enormously and cannot be usefully compared.

Of more concern is the finding that total expenditure on education is not particularly pro-poor in any of the groups of countries surveyed in the GMR. This is especially the case in SSA and Asia and the Pacific. Pro-rich expenditure on secondary and tertiary tends to counterbalance expenditure on primary.

The discussion on external aid is instructive. The GMR notes that there are changing levels, distribution and sources. The recent decline in ODA to education stands in contradiction to earlier donor commitments but donors are concerned about the absorptive capacity of their partner countries. There is also a general move towards education sector budget support or pure budget support for more effective delivery of ODA. SWAs have become a favoured modality but there are problems with this approach, particularly in terms of recipient capacity, whether real ownership is achieved and whether sectoral programs actually succeed in reaching the poor. What comes clearly out of the GMR discussion is the need for better tools for assessing the effectiveness of financial aid to education.

Although tools like the Catalytic Fund, the FTI and HIPC have all played a part in complementing and supporting domestic financing for education there remain substantial problems in matching external and domestic support for education. The GMR suggests that this is an area where improvements are being experienced and where there are important areas of progress. However, the financing of education remains highly problematic and there is much to be done to improve effectiveness, to ensure that the poor benefit and to see that educational finance supports the access and quality initiatives which lie at the heart of EFA.

### **3. Main issues identified**

- Those countries furthest behind in achieving the EFA goals have largely remained there.
- Tertiary education is notably slow to change (until the impact of higher female enrolments is felt through the secondary cycle)
- Safer school environments are necessary (corporal punishment, bullying, punishment regimes, sexual violence/harassment, poor hygienic conditions): structural in-school issues remain important constraints to access, equity and quality. Out of school factors such as poverty, rural or urban slum environments also affect these issues.
- For gender equity schools need more female teachers as role models plus unbiased classroom interaction (too few secondary female teachers, sexist practices, teacher expectations of girls, interaction favours boys, gender make-up of classes, teachers untrained in gender issues)

- Learning content is usually not gender sensitive (subject choices, text books, stereotypical roles etc),
- Gender equality in learning outcomes is changing: girls are performing better except in science but there are variations among countries. Boys' achievement is giving cause for concern generally
- School policies make the difference – teacher treatment of girls in languages and mathematics, gender stereotyping by teachers (note differences between developed & developing worlds), need for equal opportunities for boys and girls in subject choices
- The pace of gender parity seems to have slowed; low enrolments generally mean low enrolments of girls
- Access issues are often related to quality; increased enrolments are not always accompanied by increased teacher supply, adequate buildings and hygiene facilities and improved learning content
- Financing improved access remains problematic although a number of successful private/public and other funding strategies have been adopted, especially where fees have been abolished
- Variations between countries are often matched by variations within countries; more qualitative information is required for successful planning
- Child labour issues and the needs of disadvantaged groups are being addressed but progress remains slow in many countries
- The chapter on financing education is strong and well presented; it makes a clear distinction between external and domestic sources of funding, the challenges facing donors seeking effective ways of using their resources, the disturbing reliance in domestic funding on household contributions, the level of government commitment revealed in the share of GDP devoted to education and numerous other significant issues. This section deserves considerable attention as it holds the key to much of the future progress with EFA.

#### **4. Gendered Analysis of the GMR 2008 Annexes**

These observations are drawn mainly from the “*Education for All Development Index*” annex, the “*National policies to Advance Education for All in thirty countries*”, and some from the “*Aid Tables*” annex. The observations are distilled to relate specifically to those themes and cross-cutting topics to be addressed at the UNGEI Technical meeting. Based on the analysis of the global situation presented in these annexes, for policies related to service provision, countries have rightly focused most attention on broadening girls' access to education. Though that progress is not uniform or universal yet and efforts need to be maintained there, the critical next steps countries must take are to improve the quality of education for girls so that the necessary conditions exist to allow them to stay in school once there. The other major policy direction revealed in the annexes was toward decentralization of governance. For both of these areas, the most productive investment to maximize the expected benefits of these policies, would be in the development of gender-sensitive professional training for those who work in education at all levels. This training, ideally, would 1) examine the social construction of gender identities and how gender privilege plays itself out in governance and administration of schools and classrooms; and 2) assist education professionals to create high quality, gender-sensitive participatory and learning experiences for all girls and boys with the goal of empowering all participants and students. The recommendations made at the end of this synthesis serve these objectives.

Three key themes will be considered by both WGEFA and HLG:

- **Equity: realizing the right to education and ensuring inclusion**

In the “*National Policies*” annex there was a broad array of measures taken by governments to expand access to more school-aged children, and returning adults. The table below shows this spectrum.

**Table 1 – Array of all measures taken to expand access in order of frequency of adoption**

1. early childhood	for disadvantaged communities
2. identity targeted policies	gender; SES; disabilities; ethnic
3. supply	construction of (pre- and) primary schools; dorms for girls, rural, ethnic minority populations; multiple shifts; multi-grade classes; increasing teacher numbers; teacher recruitment to rural/remote areas
4. geographical	urban; rural; provincial
5. financing	regional subsidies; community grants; federal assistance to disadvantaged;
6. literacy	Youth; adult; female; out of school youth
7. cost reduction/ elimination	school fee abolition; cash transfer programs (with and without conditions); reducing other in/direct costs
8. coordination	public-private; with civil society; among government ministries
9. non-formal education	adult literacy; re-entry for youth and adults; equivalency for basic education, practical knowledge, and life skills; out of school and working children
10. essential service provision	health; nutrition; improved sanitation
11. teacher quality	teacher recruitment especially female, and for rural areas

Analysis: The attention to gender among policies of access (inclusion and equity) is positive. Two of the three most frequently adopted policies have an explicit gendered dimension: identity targeted policies; and the supply of schools or dorms. Where policies target disadvantaged communities or members within communities (the most frequently adopted policy category), female headed households which tend to have lower incomes, will also be positively affected by early childhood initiatives. Gender figures into other categories on the list as well, where literacy programs target adult females or where recruitment of new teachers focuses on increasing the number of women in the profession, as well as programs that aim to improve access to education through improvements in health, nutrition or sanitation. Whether the essential service interventions take into account the differing needs for females and males is unknown, so their full impact is unknown.

- **Quality education and learning**

Table 2 was synthesized from the “*National Policies*” annex and shows the full array of policies directed toward improving quality of education.



**Table 2: Array of all measures taken to improve learning in order of frequency of adoption**

1. curriculum revision	standards based; girl-friendly; linguistic/ethnic diversity; life skills and HIV/AIDS; secularization; incorporation of ICT
2. standardized assessments	individuals; grade level tests; institutional assessments; international assessments; subject based assessments; reporting system for achievement & progress
3. promotion	automatic promotion; removal of automatic promotion
4. educator quality	teacher training; incentives for teacher improvements; contractual innovations; more teachers; more female teachers; improved quality of training institutions; use of ICT in professional development
5. materials	improved production and distribution of teacher and student texts; primary school libraries
6. management & administration	principal training; site based management; community involvement; civil society oversight; decentralized purchasing
7. non formal provision	women's training centres; vocational
8. essential service provision	water and sanitation; school feeding

Analysis: Gender figures among the top themes within the most frequent policy adopted related to quality as well. Women are specifically targeted in two other areas lower on the list—in the recruitment of female teachers and non-formal provision of skills—though these initiatives are undertaken by relatively few countries. Gender is highly relevant though not explicitly mentioned among the policies related to management and administration. Because of who occupies traditional roles of authority within schools and ministries, considering gender there is fundamental.

### **5. Financing EFA: planning for adequate domestic and external allocations to basic education.**

The following observations are derived from the “*Aid Tables*” annex and demonstrate trends in funding irrespective of gender:

5.1. The share of ODA from bi-laterals that was designated for education was between 2-24%. Ten of the 22 earmarked 9% or less, while two allocated 20% or more.

5.2. The share of basic education within total ODA to education was between 4-80% with avg. of 41% going to basic education. This may or may not include non-formal or formal adult literacy programs. (Aid Data, p. 377)

Though this data on educational financing is not broken down along gender lines, it has potentially positive implications for girls and women. The data can be considered relevant to gender insofar as 1) girls are generally disproportionately excluded from basic education to begin with; and 2) those girls who do enter tend to persist for shorter periods of time than do their male

counterparts. To the extent that investment here expands coverage and improves quality of education provided, girls stand to benefit from this increased spending. (Also, basic education is less costly per capita than secondary or tertiary education, so these funds can potentially reach greater numbers of people in general than investments in the subsequent tiers.)

These numbers are not insignificant, though as noted in the summary of the GMR, funding for basic education in this period decreased from previous years.

Two cross-cutting themes will also be examined:

- Fragile states – *there is nothing included in the annexes that specifically speaks to fragile states.* Though fragile states were not dealt with in detail in the annexes, there is a deep gendered aspect to phenomena in these states as well. Here, the impact is felt differently by boys and girls in situations of conflict, economic and governance fragility.
- (Neglected) EFA goals. The specific data included in the above tables as regards access and quality is set within the broader national policy/legislative climate. This legislative backdrop provides good information about the general direction countries are working toward. If policy is understood to lead and precede change, these trends demonstrate both where progress can be anticipated and signal the areas into which policy must next move.

Table 3 - Overall achievement toward goals and number of countries of the 30 reporting countries:

Goal 2	Improved NER in primary	20
Goal 6	Survival rate to grade 5, school quality, decreased repetition	15
Goal 1	Increased pre-primary GER	9
Goal 5	Reduced Gender disparity	9
Goal 4	Increased adult literacy rate	7
Goal 4	Adult literacy (female)	3
Goal 2	Reduced out of school children	2
Goal 2	Reduced sub-national disparities	1

Analysis: The greatest improvement across all goals came in the general upward trend toward Goal 2 related to universal primary schooling. About 75% of the countries had made progress in one way or another in getting more young people in school while about 50% made strides toward Goal 6 in their abilities to keep them there through improvements in relevant and quality schooling. Because girls are more often excluded from schooling than are boys and are less likely to persist in it, both of these achievements have particular importance for girls. Beyond that, almost one third of the countries showed intentional movement toward Goal 5 improving gender parity. While one third of the countries also expanded coverage of early child educational opportunities and focused on adult literacy (Goals 1 and 5 respectively) these remain among the neglected of all of the EFA Goals. And life-skills based education, Goal 3, did not make the chart.

Table 4 - Overall challenges toward goals and number of the 30 reporting countries:

Goal 2	Regional, ethnic, and income disparity in access	12
Goal 4	Reduce illiteracy, (especially among women, rural, youth or adults)	10
Goal 6	Increase grade 5 survival rate; drop out and repetition rates need improvement	9
Goal 6	Most indicators at low levels, low quality	9
Goal 2	Reverses in primary NER, high rate of out of school children	8
Goal 1	Low pre-primary GER or need for improvement of pre-primary	6
Goal 5	Gender disparities in attainment	3

Analysis: The challenges countries continue to face in relation to these goals dilute some of the more promising achievements. In some cases, the same country was noted to have made significant achievements in one area because the starting point was so low to begin with, but was still found to experience considerable lags. Along those lines, while two thirds of the countries improved access to primary education, Goal 2, over one third of the countries still show obstacles to inclusion and equity in basic education owing to regional, ethnic, and income differences. In addition, one third of all countries had stagnated or showed setbacks in the quality of education that was provided to those who did make it into schools, Goal 6.

Progress toward Goal 4 related to literacy and continuing adult education was the second largest challenge. As above, as females are over-represented in those who are out of school or who have lower levels of educational attainment in many of these countries, girls and women will be disproportionately affected by these deficits, thereby constraining the advance made toward Goal 5 in the previous section; three countries were noted for gender disparity in particular. Where nine of the countries expanded coverage of pre-primary schooling, six still showed low GER or were cited for its low quality.

## 6. General Analysis & Recommendations:

The placement of and attention to gender-related issues ranks highest in the area of access (inclusion and equity) but considerably less as related to improved learning (quality), and financing is not gender disaggregated. In many ways, this is not surprising. The demonstrated gap between inclusion and quality corroborates what is visible to students of gender in education. What the data show is that countries have a variety of options available to facilitate girls' access to schooling and that the combination of those efforts produces results. This is the policy equivalent to the economist's "lowest hanging fruit."

What proves more difficult, and where fewer proven tools/interventions exist, is in the capacity of making schools safe and productive places for girls to flourish. The reality that it is harder to keep them there and provide good learning opportunities for them underscores a vital and neglected area of investment. Subrahmanian's (2005) three-pronged framework of "rights to, rights within, and rights through education" (p. 395) is useful here. The bulk of the interventions presently secure girls' rights *to* education, but have not been able to preserve her rights *within* those institutions, nor deliver on the promise of providing meaningful life alternatives facilitated

by the rights earned *through* a transformative education. Without attention to how gendered power dynamics that favour men and boys are built into the way institutions are conceived, structured, and operated—from the way decisions are made to the way gender is represented in textbooks—the efforts taken and resources invested to extend basic education to females is constrained.

The next generation of interventions is implied here and they must build on the progress made by the current generation. The present initiatives are quantitative measures and number-oriented. To mainstream gender however, the crucial next steps must capture the qualitative characteristics of these institutions and the relationships that govern them. Demonstrable gains in quality will be achieved only when the more fundamental issues of gendered power relations are addressed by well-constructed programming that connects policy to reality. This fruit is much harder to reach and requires concentrated resources. The recommendations below build on the present policy directions and advocate for shifting some of the focus to heretofore neglected goals.

Of the six EFA goals, three are considered neglected: adult literacy; early childhood development; and, gender parity, in that order. According to the tables above, Goal 3 pertaining to life skills is glaringly absent. All of these have strong gendered dimensions, and all would benefit from using gender as an organizing principle, as mainstreaming mandates. Placing gender on top would necessarily bring the others along as well, while the converse is less probable. Because the critical mass in policy currently surrounds promoting ECD and Decentralization & Governance, the recommendations below will focus on what measures could be taken to address fundamental, gendered issues within them.

## **7. Decentralization & Governance**

Focusing on quality and organizing around gender would address gender parity on many levels within education and would push past parity toward equality.

Principal training: Where principals are more likely to be male than female, components must be built into their preparation programs to examine how they may create environments that encourage and genuinely incorporate female contributions. This requires some examination and redefinition of “power” and “authority” traditionally associated with that position and the processes through which decisions are made.

Teacher training: Where teachers are predominantly female, components must be built into their preparation programs to examine how gender socialization works so that they may better identify it in their own interactions among peers as well as prevent it from being reproduced among their students. In addition to the application this has to governance, it also has curricular.

Local development of culturally relevant curriculum: The previous point suggests local development of curriculum at the university level to address these issues as well as locally developed curricula to be used at primary and secondary schools that uncover hidden gender biases that undermine the humanity of boys as well as girls. Where girls are often socialized into disempowered roles that train them to defer to others’ thinking and that separate them from their human right to take initiative and act in their own best interests, learning experiences need to be structured that contradict these messages and provide genuine opportunities to problem solve. In

such a scenario, boys are socialized into roles that narrowly define their power only in terms of their abilities to make decisions and providing *for* females since they cannot act on their own behalves. Providing these males with relevant learning experiences that allow them to think with their female counterparts, to see their female classmates apply their intelligence to problems and issues will similarly dismantle this constraining male stereotype. The movement seen in several countries toward child-centred instruction is a natural and fertile entry point for this work.

### **8. Early Childhood Care & Education**

Because gender socialization starts early, and boys and girls learn the roles they and others are expected to play, expanding access to high quality gender-sensitive pre-primary schooling is critical in mitigating the effects from the earliest stage. Qualitative change here relied heavily on teacher training as well. While curriculum is less content oriented at this level, play and skills acquisition is emphasized. Preparing teachers to identify gender bias in how boys and girls are encouraged to spend their “play” time means that boys and girls will not have to be untrained about gender-defined roles later. Also, teachers at this and all levels would benefit from training that requires them to look at and identify how their long term, life expectations of their students may also break along gender lines and the short and long term effects of those interactions.

**Annexes: A Gender analysis of EFA GMR 2008 statistical tables, per EFA goal, follows**

## Gendered Analysis of the Annexes

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12. early childhood	for disadvantaged communities
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15. geographical	urban; rural; provincial
16. financing	regional subsidies; community grants; federal assistance to disadvantaged;
17. literacy	Youth; adult; female; out of school youth
18. cost reduction/ elimination	school fee abolition; cash transfer programs (with and without conditions); reducing other in/direct costs
19. coordination	public-private; with civil society; among government ministries
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21. essential service provision	health; nutrition; improved sanitation
22. teacher quality	teacher recruitment especially female, and for rural areas

Analysis: The attention to gender among policies of access (inclusion and equity) is positive. Two of the three most frequently adopted policies have an explicit gendered dimension: identity targeted policies; and the supply of schools or dorms. Where policies target disadvantaged communities or members within communities (the most frequently adopted policy category), female headed households which tend to have lower incomes, will also be positively affected by early childhood initiatives. Gender figures into other categories on the list as well, where literacy programs target adult females or where recruitment of new teachers focuses on increasing the number of women in the profession, as well as programs that aim to improve access to education through improvements in health, nutrition or sanitation. Whether the essential service interventions take into account the differing needs for females and males is unknown, so their full impact is unknown.

- **Quality education and learning**

Table 2 was synthesized from the “*National Policies*” annex and shows the full array of policies directed toward improving quality of education.

**Table 2: Array of all measures taken to improve learning in order of frequency of adoption**

9. curriculum revision	standards based; girl-friendly; linguistic/ethnic diversity; life skills and HIV/AIDS; secularization; incorporation of ICT
10. standardized assessments	individuals; grade level tests; institutional assessments; international assessments; subject based assessments; reporting system for achievement & progress
11. promotion	automatic promotion; removal of automatic promotion
12. educator quality	teacher training; incentives for teacher improvements; contractual innovations; more teachers; more female teachers; improved quality of training institutions; use of ICT in professional development
13. materials	improved production and distribution of teacher and student texts; primary school libraries
14. management & administration	principal training; site based management; community involvement; civil society oversight; decentralized purchasing
15. non formal provision	women's training centers; vocational
16. essential service provision	water and sanitation; school feeding

Analysis: Gender figures among the top themes within the most frequent policy adopted related to quality as well. Women are specifically targeted in two other areas lower on the list—in the recruitment of female teachers and non-formal provision of skills—though these initiatives are undertaken by relatively few countries. Gender is highly relevant though not explicitly mentioned among the policies related to management and administration. Because of who occupies traditional roles of authority within schools and ministries, considering gender there is fundamental.

▪ **Financing EFA: planning for adequate domestic and external allocations to basic education.**

The following observations are derived from the “*Aid Tables*” annex and demonstrate trends in funding irrespective of gender:

1. Share of ODA from bi-laterals that was designated for education was between 2-24%. Ten of the 22 earmarked 9% or less, while two allocated 20% or more.
2. The share of basic education within total ODA to education was between 4-80% with avg. of 41% going to basic education. This may or may not include non-formal or formal adult literacy programs. (Aid Data, p. 377)

Though this data on educational financing is not broken down along gender lines, it has potentially positive implications for girls and women. The data can be considered relevant to gender insofar as 1) girls are generally disproportionately excluded from basic education to begin with; and 2) those girls who do enter tend to persist for shorter periods of time than do their male counterparts. To the extent that investment here expands coverage and improves quality of education provided, girls stand to benefit from this increased spending. (Also, basic education is less costly per capita than secondary or tertiary education, so these funds can potentially reach greater numbers of people in general than investments in the subsequent tiers.)

These numbers are not insignificant, though as noted in the summary of the GMR, funding for basic education in this period decreased from previous years.

Two cross-cutting themes will also be examined:

- Fragile states – *there is nothing included in the annexes that specifically speaks to fragile states.* Though fragile states were not dealt with in detail in the annexes, there is a deep gendered aspect to phenomena in these states as well. Here, the impact is felt more heavily on boys than girls when states are fragile as a result of conflict and where child-soldiers (male) are recruited and relied upon.



▪ **(Neglected) EFA goals**

The policy/legislative climate within the country usually sets the direction for other efforts, therefore, the specific initiatives undertaken within countries as regards access and quality are shaped by those broader parameters. This legislative backdrop provides good information about the general direction countries are working toward. If policy is understood to lead and precede change, these trends demonstrate both where progress can be anticipated and signal the areas into which policy must next move.

Table 3 - Overall achievement toward goals and number of countries of the 30 reporting countries:

Goal 2	Improved NER in primary	20
Goal 6	Survival rate to grade 5, school quality, decreased repetition	15
Goal 1	Increased pre-primary GER	9
Goal 5	Reduced Gender disparity	9
Goal 4	Increased adult literacy rate	7
Goal 4	Adult literacy (female)	3
Goal 2	Reduced out of school children	2
Goal 2	Reduced sub-national disparities	1

Analysis: The greatest improvement across all goals came in the general upward trend toward Goal 2 related to universal primary schooling. About 75% of the countries had made progress in one way or another in getting more young people in school while about 50% made strides toward Goal 6 in their abilities to keep them there through improvements in relevant and quality schooling. Because girls are more often excluded from schooling than are boys and are less likely to persist in it, both of these achievements have particular importance for girls. Beyond that, almost one third of the countries showed intentional movement toward Goal 5 improving gender parity. While one third of the countries also expanded coverage of early child educational opportunities and focused on adult literacy (Goals 1 and 5 respectively) these remain among the neglected of all of the EFA Goals. And life-skills based education, Goal 3, did not make the chart.

Table 4 - Overall challenges toward goals and number of the 30 reporting countries:

Goal 2	Regional, ethnic, and income disparity in access	12
Goal 4	Reduce illiteracy, (esp among women, rural, youth or adults)	10
Goal 6	Stem fall in grade 5 survival rate, drop out and repetition rates need improvement	9
Goal 6	Most indicators at low levels, low quality	9
Goal 2	Reverses in primary NER, high rate of out of school children	8
Goal 1	Low pre-primary GER or needs improvement of pre-primary	6
Goal 5	Gender disparities in attainment	3

Analysis: The global challenges countries continue to face in relation to these goals dilutes some of the more promising achievements. In some cases, the same country was noted to have made significant achievements in one area but because the starting point was so low to begin with, was still found to experience considerable lags. Along those lines, while two thirds of the countries improved access to primary education, Goal 2, over one third of the countries still show obstacles to inclusion and equity in basic education owing to regional, ethnic, and income differences. In addition, one third of all countries had stagnated or showed setbacks in the quality of education that was provided to those who did make it into schools, Goal 6.

Progress toward Goal 4 related to literacy and continuing adult education was the second largest challenge. As above, as females are over-represented in those who are out of school or who have lower levels of educational attainment in many of these countries, girls and women will be disproportionately affected by these deficits, thereby constraining the advance made toward Goal 5 in the previous section; three countries were noted for gender disparity in particular. Where nine of the countries expanded coverage of pre-primary schooling, six still showed low GER or were cited for its low quality.

### **General Analysis & Recommendations:**

The placement of and attention to gender-related issues ranks highest in the area of access (inclusion and equity) but considerably less as related to improved learning (quality), and financing is not gender disaggregated. In many ways, this is not surprising. The demonstrated gap between inclusion and quality corroborates what is visible to students of gender in education. What the data show is that countries have a variety of options available to facilitate girls' access to schooling and that the combination of those efforts produces results. This is the policy equivalent to the economist's "lowest hanging fruit."

What proves more difficult, and where fewer proven tools/interventions exist, is in the capacity of making schools safe and productive places for girls to flourish. The reality that it is harder to keep them there and provide good learning opportunities for them underscores a vital and neglected area of investment. Subrahmanian's (2005) three-pronged framework of "rights to, rights within, and rights through education" (p. 395) is useful here. The bulk of the interventions presently secure girls' rights *to* education, but have not been able to preserve her rights *within* those institutions, nor deliver on the promise of providing meaningful life alternatives facilitated by the rights earned *through* a transformative education. Without attention to how gendered power dynamics that favor men and boys are built into the way institutions are conceived, structured, and operated—from the way decisions are made to the way gender is represented in textbooks—the efforts taken and resources invested to extend basic education to females is constrained.

The next generation of interventions is implied here and they must build on the progress made by the current generation. The present initiatives are quantitative measures and number-oriented. To mainstream gender however, the crucial next steps must capture the qualitative characteristics of these institutions and the relationships that govern them. Demonstrable gains in quality will be achieved only when the more fundamental issues of gendered power relations are addressed by well-constructed programming that connects policy to reality. This fruit is much harder to reach and requires concentrated resources. The recommendations below build on the present policy directions and advocate for shifting some of the focus to heretofore neglected goals.

Of the six EFA goals, three are considered neglected: adult literacy; early childhood development; and, gender parity, in that order. According to the tables above, Goal 3 pertaining to life skills is glaringly absent. All of these have strong gendered dimensions, and all would benefit from using gender as an organizing principle, as mainstreaming mandates. Placing gender on top would necessarily bring the others along as well, while the converse is less probable. Because the critical mass in policy currently surrounds promoting ECD and Decentralization & Governance, the recommendations below will focus on what measures could be taken to address fundamental, gendered issues within them.

### **Decentralization & Governance**

Focusing on quality and organizing around gender would address gender parity on many levels within education and would push past parity toward equality.

Principal/head master/head teacher training: Where principals are more likely to be male than female, components must be built into their preparation programs to examine how they may create environments that encourage and genuinely incorporate female contributions. This requires some examination and redefinition of "power" and "authority" traditionally associated with that position and the processes through which decisions are made.

Teacher training: Where teachers are predominantly female, components must be built into their preparation programs to examine how gender socialization works so that they may better identify it in their own interactions among peers as well as prevent it from being reproduced among their students. In addition to the application this has to governance, it also has curricular.

### **Curriculum**

Local development of culturally relevant curriculum: The previous point suggests local development of curriculum at the university level to address these issues as well as locally developed curricula to be used at primary and secondary schools that uncover hidden gender biases that undermine the humanity of boys as well as girls. Where girls are often socialized into disempowered roles that train them to defer to others' thinking

and that separate them from their human right to take initiative and act in their own best interests, learning experiences need to be structured that contradict these messages and provide genuine opportunities to problem solve. In such a scenario, boys are socialized into roles that narrowly define their power only in terms of their abilities to make decisions and providing *for* females since they cannot act on their own behalves. Providing these males with relevant learning experiences that allow them to think with their female counterparts, to see their female classmates apply their intelligence to problems and issues will similarly dismantle this constraining male stereotype. The movement seen in several countries toward child-centered instruction is a natural and fertile entry point for this work.

### **Early Childhood Care & Education**

Because gender socialization starts early, and boys and girls learn the roles they and others are expected to play, expanding access to high quality gender-sensitive pre-primary schooling is critical in mitigating the effects from the earliest stage. Qualitative change here relied heavily on teacher training as well. While curriculum is less content oriented at this level, play and skills acquisition is emphasized. Preparing teachers to identify gender bias in how boys and girls are encouraged to spend their “play” time means that boys and girls will not have to be untrained about gender-defined roles later. Also, teachers at this and all levels would benefit from training that requires them to look at and identify how their long term, life expectations of their students may also break along gender lines and the short and long term effects of those interactions.