



Global Voices Information Sheet

Girls' Education



Girls' Education

- According to the World Bank, in the last 30 years, the gender gap in primary schools in the developing world narrowed from 38 per cent girls and 62 per cent boys to 48 per cent girls and 52 per cent boys.
- This demonstrates a lot of progress, but there is still gender disparity when it comes to completing education. Often, it's girls who handle the burden of household chores and must drop out in order to help the family survive.
- When girls do go to school though, there are a host of benefits that help the entire community.
- According to the World Bank, one year of female education reduces fertility rates by 10 per cent, something that in turn lowers infant, child and maternal mortality. It also contributes to delayed marriage and family planning which slows and even reduces the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- Girls' education also helps fight gender inequality. With an education, girls can better carve out a niche for themselves in the workforce, earn more income and support their families.
- Investing in girls' education now even has an impact down the road. According to the World Bank, each additional year of formal education completed by a mother translates into her children remaining in school for an additional one-third to one-half year.

Key Terms

- **activism** – the doctrine or practice of vigorous action or involvement as a means of achieving political or other goals, sometimes by demonstrations, protests, etc.
- **confidence** – belief in oneself and one's powers or abilities
- **identity** – condition or character as to who a person or what a thing is
- **microfinance** – a means of extending credit, usually in the form of small loans with no collateral, to nontraditional borrowers such as the poor in rural or undeveloped areas
- **self-assurance** – confidence in the validity, value, etc., of one's own ideas, opinions, etc.

For more information see the Power of a Girl Initiative at www.freethechildren.com/girls or see the World Bank's girls' education site at <http://go.worldbank.org/1L4BH3TG20>.

Global Voices Elementary Educator Resources

Note to Educators:

The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom.

In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. Activities are structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Extension and conclusion activities are included to challenge students and finally, encourage them to reflect on the issues at hand.

Since these activities are designed as discussions rather than formal lessons, assessment strategies are not included.

Themes and Course Connections:

- Themes: girls education, female empowerment, and role models.
- Course Connections: The Arts, Language and Social Studies.

Materials:

- Chart paper or blackboard
- Tape
- Global Voices column

Specific Expectations and Learning Goals:

Students will:

- Develop and express responses to issues and problems.
- Reassess their responses to issues on the basis of new information.
- Participate in active group work and class discussions.
- Communicate effectively in written and spoken language or other forms of expression.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically.
- Develop, express, and defend a position on an issue and explain how to put the ideas into action.

Knowledge and Understanding:

1. Girls' Education (estimated time: 20 minutes)
 - a. Draw a line down the middle of the classroom (tape can be used to achieve this).
 - b. Explain to students that one side of the classroom is the "agree" side, while the other is the "disagree" side.
 - c. Read the statements below and have students go and stand on the side of the room that reflects their opinion. Students are also able to stand in the middle, meaning that they are unsure or they neither agree nor disagree.
 - d. Once students have chosen their side, ask them to explain their opinion. At this time, allow students to change sides if hearing other students' thoughts changes their mind.
 - e. Read the following suggested statements to the class:
 - i. Girls and boys are treated differently in society.

- ii. Girls and boys are equal.
 - iii. Girls often fall victim to stereotypes, such as “boys are better at sports than girls.”
 - iv. Many girls around the world are still not being granted their rights.
 - v. Many girls around the world are not granted equal and fair access to education.
 - vi. Same sex schools are better for learning than co-ed schools.
 - vii. Education can empower girls to challenge stereotypes and succeed in society.
 - viii. Girls’ education and the promotion of gender equality are vital to development.
- f. Once this activity is complete, ask students to discuss what they know about the power and benefits of girls’ education.

Thinking:

1. Guided Reading: The Global Voices Column (estimated time: 20 minutes)
 - a. Have students sit in a circle and distribute one copy of the Global Voices column to each student.
 - b. Pre-reading steps:
 - i. Make predictions: ask students to read the title of the column and view the pictures. After doing so, ask them to make predictions as to what the column is going to be about.
 - ii. Introduce vocabulary from the column.
 - iii. Assess prior knowledge: ask students to discuss what they already know about these topics.
 - c. Reading steps:
 - i. Go around the circle and have each student read a section of the column to the class, giving each student a turn to read.
 - ii. As students are reading, offer guidance and coaching by providing prompts, asking questions, and encouraging attempts at reading strategy application.
 - d. Post reading steps:
 - i. Encourage students to provide a summary of the column in order to ensure they have understood the series of events.
 - ii. Ask questions about the text to judge comprehension.
2. Media Literacy (estimated time: 15 minutes)
 - a. Ask students to practice their media literacy skills by identifying the following:
 - i. Title: include the full title of the article (also called the headline).
 - ii. Author: give the author’s full name; if there is no author given, indicate if the article is an editorial or from a foreign news source.
 - iii. Newspaper: the full name of the newspaper from which the article is taken.
 - iv. Date: the day the article appeared in the newspaper.
 - v. Subject: the overall topic that the article is describing.
 - vi. Event: the event that led to the writing of the article.
 - vii. Main idea: identify what the article is proving or arguing about the issue. Is it trying to convince readers to take a side? If so, what opinion is it encouraging?
 - viii. Evidence: list several facts/arguments that support the main idea and help to convince the reader or inform them of the issue. Does the author provide enough factual material to support his/her ideas?
 - ix. Significance: explain why this issue is important and whom it may affect.
 - x. Point of view: is the article, in your opinion, balanced or biased? Are different viewpoints presented?

- b. When this is complete, bring the class back together and discuss student answers.

Communication:

1. Girl Empowerment (estimated time: 20 minutes)
 - a. In the Global Voices column it is stated that women with formal education are much more likely to:
 - i. Use reliable family planning methods.
 - ii. Delay marriage and childbearing.
 - iii. Have fewer and healthier babies.
 - iv. Contribute to lower infant mortality rates.
 - v. Contribute to lower maternal mortality rates.
 - vi. Decrease HIV/AIDS infection.
 - vii. Increase women's labor force participation rates and earnings.
 - viii. Create intergenerational education benefits.
 - b. Divide the class into groups of four.
 - c. Ask the groups to go down the list and record point form notes about the impact that women's education can have on this issue.
 - d. When groups have finished their brainstorm, bring the class back together and discuss each topic as a class.

Application:

1. Role Models: Art Project (estimated time: 1 hour)
 - a. Write the heading "Role Model" on the board.
 - b. Ask students to list all the qualities of a role model. Record these answers underneath the heading.
 - c. When this list is complete, write the heading "My Role Model" beside the first list. Ask students to list examples of people they admire and consider a role model. List these answers underneath the heading.
 - d. When these lists are complete, ask students to choose a role model (whether male or female, celebrity or family member) and create a poster about their role model. On this poster students can display pictures, actions, words, etc., to relay why this individual is their role model, what they mean to them, and the things they have done to make the world a better place.
 - e. When posters are complete, students will display the final products around the classroom as a gallery walk.
 - f. Invite other students to come view the gallery of role models.

Additional Resources:

In addition to the above lesson plans, you may want to share some additional resources with your students. Listed below are some links to useful online resources:

Free The Children – www.freethechildren.com

The Power of a Girl Initiative - <http://www.freethechildren.com/girls/>