



Global Voices Information Sheet

Girls' Education



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- 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 Secondary 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: Canadian and World Studies, English and Social Sciences and Humanities.

Materials:

- Chart paper or blackboard
- Computers and internet
- 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: 15 minutes)
 - a. Explain to students that in some parts of the world, political, religious and social barriers stand in the way of girls and their education.
 - b. Ask students to identify the many circumstances that perpetuate gender inequality in educational environments. Write answers on the board.
 - c. When this list is complete, discuss with the class the importance of educational opportunities for females by asking the following suggested questions:
 - i. Why is education important?
 - ii. What opportunities does education bring to you?
 - iii. What is the value of education for girls?
 - iv. What opportunities can education bring to girls around the world?

2. When this discussion is complete, ask students to write a short reflection about the importance of educational opportunities for girls.

Thinking:

1. Reading Comprehension: Global Voices Column (estimated time: 15 minutes)
 - a. Pre reading steps:
 - i. Introduce the topic and encourage students to discuss what they already know about the issue, making predictions around what the column is about.
 - b. Reading steps:
 - i. Read: students must read the text independently, highlighting important points throughout the column.
 - ii. Ask: students must ask themselves what the story is about, recording five questions they are unsure of after reading the column.
 - iii. Paraphrase: encourage students to write point form notes in their own words around what the column is about.
 - c. Post reading discussion:
 - i. What are the main points of the column?
 - ii. What emotions did this column evoke in you?
 - iii. What problem is identified in the column?
 - iv. What questions do you have about the column?
2. Media Literacy (estimated time: 10 minutes)
 - a. Ask each student to perform an OPVL on the Global Voice column.
 - i. Origin: what is the source of this column?
 - ii. Purpose: why was this column written?
 - iii. Value: what are the facts and statistics in this column that give it value?
 - iv. Limitations: what perspective is the column written from, does this cause limitations?
 - b. When this is complete, bring the class back together and discuss student answers.

Communication:

1. Role Models (estimated time: 30 minutes)
 - a. Write the heading "Role Model" on the board.
 - b. Ask students to list the different characteristics they associate with a role model. Write these characteristics underneath the heading.
 - c. When this lists is complete, ask students to define the term role model.
 - d. Ask students to join into partners.
 - e. In their partners, students must choose an individual in the media that they believe to be a positive role model to young girls or boys. Ask the students to outline why they believe this person to be a positive role model.
 - f. When this is complete, ask the partners to select a person in the media that they believe to be a negative role model for young girls or boys. Once they have done this, ask them to list the reasons why they believe this person is a negative role model.
 - g. When partners have completed their work, ask them to briefly explain to the class their selections.
 - h. When presentations are complete, ask students to write a brief personal reflection in a journal about how they hope to lead their life so that they can be a role model to young girls and boys.

Application:

1. Girls Education: Research Project (estimated time: take home assignment)
 - 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. In an independent research project, ask students to investigate one of the above issues relating to women and education. Students must research this topic and explain the relationship between women's education and the issue and the impact that women's education can have on this issue.
 - c. Students will hand in completed projects for grading.

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/>