



LET ✦  
**GIRLS**  
**LEARN**

The best judge of whether or not  
a country is going to develop is how  
it treats its women.

- PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

Around the world 62 million girls are not in school. Millions more are fighting to stay there. As a girl grows older the fight to get an education becomes even harder. Her family must be able to afford and be willing to pay school fees. She risks long, dangerous walks to school. She may become pregnant or be forced to marry. And she often lacks access to healthcare and the support she needs to learn. From Nigeria to Pakistan, it's time to *Let Girls Learn*.

*Let Girls Learn* is a new whole-of-government initiative to ensure adolescent girls get the education they deserve. Building on USAID's initial *Let Girls Learn* funding and education programs, the initiative will elevate existing programs, including in areas of conflict and crisis, leverage public-private partnerships, and challenge organizations and governments to commit resources to lift up adolescent girls worldwide. USAID will work in collaboration with the White House, the Peace Corps and the Department of State.

### USAID FAST FACTS

- We invest approximately \$1 billion annually in education programs.
- We've helped train over 300,000 teachers worldwide.
- We provided over 35 million textbooks and teaching materials in a single year.
- We helped Ethiopia achieve 95% enrollment in primary school over the past 15 years.
- Since 2006, we helped educate over 375,000 school aged children in Somalia.
- We're supporting education programs in 18 African countries.

## WHY EDUCATE GIRLS

Education is one of the most critical areas of empowerment for women, and it shouldn't be a luxury. When girls are educated, they lead healthier and more productive lives. They gain the skills, knowledge and self-confidence to escape the cycle of poverty. They become better citizens, parents and breadwinners. An educated girl has a positive ripple effect on her health, family, community and society as a whole.

- An extra year of secondary school for girls can increase their future earnings by 10-20%.
- In India, women with no formal schooling are less likely to resist violence than women with schooling.
- In Burkina Faso, educated women are 40% less likely to subject their daughters to genital mutilation.
- Girls with secondary schooling are up to 6 times less likely to marry as children than those with little or no education.
- Each extra year of a mother's education reduces the probability of infant mortality by 5%-10%.
- If India enrolled 1% percent more girls in secondary school, their GDP would rise by \$5.5 billion.

## OUR STRATEGY

USAID's *Let Girls Learn* approach is comprised of three main pillars: **Increasing Access to Quality Education, Reducing Barriers to success, and Empowering Adolescent Girls.**

### **Increasing Access to Quality Education**

This pillar focuses on programs that teach girls to read and write, provide safe access to schools for both students and teachers, and ensure those living in areas affected by crisis and conflict have access to an education. It also helps girls to acquire education alternatives, workforce training and employment opportunities.

- In the Democratic Republic of Congo, USAID's Empowering Adolescent Girls to Lead through Education program (EAGLE) is empowering 1,660 adolescent girls to play an active role within their schools, families and communities. The program has improved school completion, and led to better knowledge of adolescent reproductive health, gender-based violence prevention, and gender equality.
- In Pakistan, Safer Schools aims to ensure children affected by humanitarian crises have access to a quality education by making schools safe from all forms of disasters – natural or man-made. Nearly 5,000 girls have already been enrolled in Temporary Learning Centers and established host communities, and approximately 100 teachers have been trained in psychosocial support, health promotion, and teaching in challenging environments.

- In Guatemala, the Lifelong Learning Project is improving access to quality education for 10,000 adolescent girls. The project is training teachers to improve classroom learning environments, and engaging parents, communities and stakeholders on student learning. We're also working with youth to achieve greater economic self-reliance and higher levels of civic engagement.

## REDUCING BARRIERS

This pillar focuses on a wide range of vulnerabilities for adolescent girls, including early pregnancy, malnutrition, menstrual hygiene, and preventing and responding to HIV. Girls also face economic barriers, including school fees and the cost of materials to attend school. This pillar also targets security, the threat of violence and programs to reduce gender-based violence, and child, early, and forced marriage.

- In Malawi, the DREAMS program is a public-private partnership that has successfully addressed HIV risk behaviors, HIV transmission, and gender-based violence for adolescent girls through schooling, mentoring and empowerment activities.
- In Bangladesh, the Protecting Human Rights program works to reduce child, early, and forced marriage through enhancing advocacy initiatives for child marriage legislation and enforcement, as well as promoting an public awareness campaigns for more than 10,000 students in grades seven and eight at 70 schools.
- In Northern Uganda, the GREAT Project works with to promote positive gender attitudes, reduce gender-based violence, and improve reproductive health for over 51,000 girls in post-conflict communities.

## EMPOWERING ADOLESCENT GIRLS

This pillar focuses on increasing girls' rights, leadership and opportunity through broader skills in finance, digital literacy, science, technology, engineering, agriculture and mathematics. It also works to change attitudes and behaviors regarding the value of girls' lives by encouraging positive gender roles, communication, and community engagement.

- The SPRING Initiative is a global effort that aims to accelerate economic empowerment for girls in parts of Africa and Asia by delivering high quality technical and financial support to early stage enterprises developing innovative products that enables girls to stay in school and support their economic empowerment.
- Women and Girls Lead Global combines the power of documentary film, national television broadcasts, local and new media, and engagement activities to impact audiences and support existing efforts by NGOs, civil society organizations and others to shift gender norms and empower women and girls.

- A woman is 21% less likely than a man to own a phone in the developing world. This equates to a mobile phone gender gap of roughly 300 million women. Through a partnership with GSMA, AusAID, and Visa, USAID's Connected Women Program, aims to enable 150 million underserved women to own and effectively use mobile phones to access vital information, networks, and services.

*For more information about how the United States is supporting girls education worldwide, please see the [White House Fact Sheet](#).*