

Chapter 4

Lessons from good practice

Chapter 3 indicates the many challenges that remain in order to close gender gaps and promote equality in education. The parity goal for 2005 remains elusive for many countries, and requires urgent action through a range of interrelated interventions. Yet, even where parity has been achieved, educational equality is often far from being attained. This chapter synthesizes a wide range of international experiences, to identify lessons for 'what works'. It begins by drawing some general lessons from history to explain national moves towards gender parity and equality. Later sections focus on the policy changes that have been important in particular countries where rapid progress has been made.

Education for women has always been highly political, given the gender discrimination that has marked most societies.

Historical lessons

In most countries that have achieved parity, the rapid progress made in women's education was a feature of the second half of the twentieth century. In many countries of sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, formal education was initially available only for boys. The consistency of this historical feature cuts across different states and different colonial experiences.¹

In Latin America, where the expansion of education systems started earlier, there had been practically no formal education for women during colonial times – although they often received instruction at home to enable them to perform domestic tasks and to help them bring up their children (Avalos, 2003).

In India, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, what was seen as women's 'backwardness' was central to the colonial 'civilizing mission', which emphasized the importance of the educated mother in reproducing future generations of citizen-subjects (Jeffery et al., 2003). More recently, middle class reform movements played an important role, seeking education for women to make them suitable companions for their educated husbands. This focus on educating women in, or for, their roles as wives and

mothers is a historical hangover that continues today in many countries.

In the Indian state of Kerala, however, the impact of a matrilineal culture and the efforts of the early modernizing state complemented each other, resulting in unprecedented educational and social development during the early twentieth century (Box 4.1). By the 1980s, when state governments elsewhere in India were striving to increase schooling enrolments, Kerala governments were seeking to close schools because of the declining primary school-age population. These different contextual circumstances demonstrate the potential power of public policy to transform women's education – even where economic growth remains modest.

Political agendas and ideology can also play decisive roles. The provision of education for women has always been highly political, given the history of gender discrimination that has marked most societies. In many, the drive to educate women has had to be framed within wider ideological constructions of the appropriate role for women. A historical perspective, however, shows how such forces can change over time. The Islamic Republic of Iran provides an interesting example of the ways in which women's education has been defined at various stages in relation to the overall goals and visions

Box 4.1. The Kerala 'model'

A major lesson from the Kerala experience, notable in India for having closed the gender gap in primary education by 2001, is the important role played by the state, and by enlightened leadership. As early as 1881, the Maharaja of Travancore had declared: 'No civilized government can be oblivious to the great advantages of popular education, for a government which has to deal with an educated population is by far stronger than one which has to control ignorant and disorderly masses. Hence education is a twice blessed thing – it benefits those who give it and those who receive it.'

From an early stage the royal states of Travancore and Cochin – both part of modern-day Kerala – viewed education as an important factor in modernization and development. The spread of education and the egalitarian ethic were mutually supportive forces. The state, for its part, invested in

village libraries and night schools in order to sustain literacy and learning. The role of Christian missionaries, who set up schools in which deprived groups were given educational opportunities, was also important.

The expansion of employment opportunities in the public sector, with no institutional or social barriers to female participation, meant that education provided women with an important means of participating in the public arena. In this traditionally matrilineal society, women in Kerala did not face the social barriers that typified many other Indian states. Although by the 1950s the matrilineal family system had disappeared in Kerala, women retained good access to public employment and political representation. Levels of female literacy remain high.

Sources: Menon (1998); Jefferey (1992).

1. See Bunwaree (1999) on Mauritius; Pong (1999) on Malaysia; and Colclough et al. (2003), on Guinea, the United Republic of Tanzania and Ethiopia.

Box 4.2. Stages of the revolution and women's status in the Islamic Republic of Iran

Iran has undergone three distinct stages since the 1979 revolution, each of which has had important implications for women. **The first stage**, over the years 1979–88, focuses on the consolidation of the Islamic Republic as the new form of state rule in Iran. This period was marked by domestic turmoil, political violence, war, economic austerity, international tension and political isolation. It was a time during which ideology was in command and strict Islamic measures were enforced. The exemplary citizen of this stage was a doctrinaire Muslim and committed revolutionary whose ideal was self-sacrifice and, ultimately, martyrdom for the cause of the revolution.

The primary goal of the religio-political leadership at this time was the Islamization and politicization of society. Islamic laws and regulations covered both the private and public domains and religion and politics were integrated in all spheres of life. 'Politicization' was the process by which Iranians were to be transformed into the 'soldiers of the revolution', dedicated to the cause of establishing an Islamic society, and loyal to the religio-political leadership. Nevertheless, during this period, the revolutionary government acted as an equalizer and aimed to provide opportunities for the marginalized sectors of the society known as the 'dispossessed'. Meanwhile, there was a conscious attempt to Islamize and politicize women, the most ideal of whom were, at the time, mothers who raised pious Muslims and revolutionary soldiers seeking martyrdom.

The second stage (1988–97) was known as the period of reconstruction, following the devastating eight-year war with Iraq. It was marked by liberalization, privatization, increased levels of political exchange and reduced isolation in the international arena. During this period women were encouraged to participate in all arenas of social, educational, political and economic life, and to contribute to post-war reconstruction.

The period since 1997 has been characterized by reform in both state and civil society: political development, religious democracy,

citizenship rights and responsibilities, and meritocracy became key themes. While some continue to adhere to a strict version of Islamic and revolutionary ideology, others advocate a more 'gentle version', that seeks domestic and international dialogue based on mutual respect and understanding. The rights-based approach of this period no longer views women as instruments of the revolutionary ideology or economic growth. The following words by President Khatami points to the new approach to womanhood in post-1997 Iran:

'We are not the guardians of women to give them something by force or take it away from them. We are only preparing the ground for women to recognize their rights and capabilities, and acknowledge their own merits. Once they have done that, they will reach their rightful position in society. And the first prerequisite is to increase women's knowledge and education' (La'li, 1999, p. 239).

This approach looks at women as independent entities – not merely wives, mothers, or soldiers of the revolution – who are entitled to basic human rights, including the right to education, in order to improve their own lives.

Women from different strata of the society have used the terminology of the three stages to their own advantage in various fields, including education. Once educated, women have, in turn, contributed to the transformation of gender relations in society. In other words, the exigencies of the three stages have called for the creation of an ideal female citizen based on the priorities of that period. Furthermore, the leaders of each stage have called on the schools to educate the ideal woman of each period. Interestingly, women have benefited from the attempt to Islamize and politicize them during the first stage; provide education and employment for them during the second; or empower them for a society based on meritocracy in the third.

Source: Mehran (2003).

of the state. It also shows how quickly these can change from being dominated by narrow, instrumental purposes to a much broader vision of the importance of women's education (Box 4.2).

Access to education can, in many conservative societies, represent an opportunity for women to move out of the household compound, allowing interaction with others outside the family circle, which in turn broadens experience and provides access to new resources and skills (Shaheed, 1995, p. 88).

Women's movements take centre stage

Historical trends and events provide the context for progress with women's education. In recent years, the collapse of authoritarian regimes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, in Latin America and other parts of the world gave an impetus to issues of rights and democracy. The return to civilian rule in many countries allowed women to press for political and legal reform at the national level. International conferences during the 1990s provided civil society organizations with a public forum, and saw the unprecedented participation of women's movements and their representatives. States have responded in different ways, signing up to

Table 4.1. Trends in fertility and female labour force participation rates, selected East Asian countries (1950–2000)

	Total fertility rate		Female labour force participation rate, age 15–64 (%)
Indonesia			
1950	5.49	(1950–55)	30.6
1960	5.42	(1960–65)	32.0
1970	5.20	(1970–75)	37.1
1980	4.11	(1980–85)	45.6
1990	3.00	(1990–95)	52.0
1999	2.6	(1995–2000)	53.2
Japan			
1950	2.75	(1950–55)	52.2
1960	2.02	(1960–65)	54.0
1970	2.07	(1970–75)	54.3
1980	1.76	(1980–85)	52.1
1990	1.49	(1990–95)	56.2
2000	1.39	(1995–2000)	59.6
Singapore			
1950	6.40	(1950–55)	22.3
1960	4.93	(1960–65)	22.9
1970	2.62	(1970–75)	31.0
1980	1.69	(1980–85)	47.4
1990	1.76	(1990–95)	54.4
1998	1.57	(1995–2000)	56.3
Republic of Korea			
1950	5.40	(1950–55)	32.1
1960	5.63	(1960–65)	30.5
1970	4.28	(1970–75)	41.2
1980	2.23	(1980–85)	50.2
1990	1.70	(1990–95)	51.1
1999	1.51	(1995–2000)	50.7
Thailand			
1950	6.40	(1950–55)	84.2
1960	6.40	(1960–65)	82.7
1970	4.97	(1970–75)	81.1
1980	3.05	(1980–85)	79.7
1990	2.10	(1990–95)	78.5
1999	1.95	(1995–2000)	69.2

Sources: ILO (1996a); ILO (2002b); United Nations Population Division (2002).

international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), putting in place quota systems, and amending or removing discriminatory laws (Molyneux and Razavi, 2002, p. 2). NGOs have acted as a laboratory for social change, providing alternative resources to women in the form of micro-finance and training in non-traditional economic activities, notably in South Asia. Modern social movements, built around the right to development, including literacy, have also contributed to mobilizing demand for education.

Among the most fundamental sources of change for women, however, have been different forms of economic and demographic transition. The relationships between family, education and work are major influences on women's futures, and on the patterns of incentives and costs facing families in deciding to send girls to school.

These factors are briefly discussed before considering more individual aspects of policy.

Economic factors: women's work, structural adjustment and globalization

Women are working outside the home more than ever before. Between the 1950s and the end of the 1990s, the proportion of women aged 20–59 who were economically active increased from around one-third to one-half. Recent estimates of female participation rates by region range from 14% in North Africa to 76% in East and Central Europe. In many cases, women's participation has increased at the expense of that of men. In half of the developing countries for which data are available, over the period 1975–95 the female participation rate rose whereas the male rate fell. The global labour force has become more female – rising from 36% in 1960 to 40% by 1997 (ILO data, cited in Razavi, 2003).

To some extent the increase in women's labour force participation rates is a statistical artefact – it reflects better ways of recording seasonal, unpaid and casual wage labour, even though much of women's work still goes unrecorded (Charmes, 1998). But it also reflects a number of real changes. In many parts of the world, more women must now work to ensure family survival – in the face of declining real wages and the increased monetary cost of subsistence resulting from cutbacks in public services and subsidies. It is therefore unsurprising to find that women's participation rates were intensified in countries where structural adjustment programmes were introduced (Pearson, 1999; Cagatay and Ozler, 1995). A further cause of the increase in women's labour force participation is the greater demand for women workers in the export sectors of some countries that have experienced considerable growth. Much of this has been in low-skilled manufacturing – notably in garments, footwear and electronic products.

Table 4.1 illustrates the employment gains for women in selected East Asian countries since

1950, and compares them with trends in fertility. Increases in participation have been particularly significant in Indonesia and Singapore. Other data show that participation rates have also increased for women of reproductive age, and although participation still declines between the 20–24 and the 30–34 age groups, they seem to be moderating. Women's employment has, in turn, contributed much to GDP growth in East Asia (Kim and Lau, 1994), which has, in many ways, been as much female led as export led (Bauer, 2001). Positive trends in women's economic status are also reported in contexts outside East Asia (McNay, 2003).

However, the employment gains made by women are as yet vulnerable to change. An apparent 'defeminization' of employment in some subsectors of export-oriented manufacturing has been noted, as export production becomes more skill- and capital-intensive (UNDESA, 1999). Among East Asian adjusters, Thailand, too, has shown setbacks (Table 4.1). A similar trend has also been taking place in the countries of East and Central Europe, where women's formal employment has fallen since the onset of economic reforms. The female labour force participation rate was lower in 1997 than in 1985 in all transition countries, and the drop in female employment was as drastic as 40% in Hungary (UNIFEM, 2000) partly because of the increasing informalization of female labour (Razavi, 2003).

Moreover, where feminization of the labour force continues, labour market conditions in general – for men as well as women – have often deteriorated towards those typically associated with 'women's jobs' (Standing, 1989). There has often been a decline in security of employment and in the proportion of jobs carrying rights against unfair dismissal, pension rights, health insurance rights and maternity rights, whereas there has been rapid growth in informal employment which lacks social protection (Elson, 2002). In short, the increase in women's economic participation in the global economy has often coincided with a deregulation in the conditions of work and in work-related entitlements. Thus, increased participation in global markets does not necessarily imply that women's economic rights can be exercised nor that their entitlements can be accessed.

In adjusting and transition economies, the education sector has suffered in three ways:

overall cuts in public expenditures often affected education disproportionately; household expenditures on the direct costs of schooling decreased as living standards fell; and the increased reliance on children's work in the home and outside led to more of them being withdrawn from school (Stromquist, 1999; Rose, 1995). The social costs of economic adjustment fell disproportionately on women, as the household became the principal site of production. Further pressures came from male migration and an increase in *de facto* women-headed households. These experiences show how the logic for economic reform can sometimes be blind to the nature of women's responsibilities, causing a negative impact on children's education, as well as on female well-being.

The demographic transition: liberating women from reproductive burdens?

Accompanying the changes in the global economy, and women's participation in economic activity, have been changes in family structure which have had important implications for women. The demographic transition has become a dramatic global phenomenon. It is characterized by a sustained decline in mortality and subsequently in fertility, such that high and approximately equal death and birth rates eventually give way to low and approximately

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Box 4.3. Fertility decline and the demographic transition

The largest mortality and fertility declines have occurred in Asia and Latin America where, between the early 1960s and the late 1990s, life expectancy increased by 36% and 22%, whereas total fertility declined by 52% and 54%, respectively. Sub-Saharan Africa lags noticeably behind. There, life expectancy is 47.1 and total fertility is 5.71, both having fallen by 16% since the early 1960s. Within regions, there are also marked differences between countries. For example, within Asia, there are contrasting fertility transitions in China, India and Pakistan. China's fertility is already below replacement level, whereas Pakistan's fertility transition has only recently got under way, with India being at an intermediate level of transition.

Source: McNay (2003).

Box 4.4. Education as contraception?

The effects of female schooling on fertility have been widely documented. More educated women have better job prospects and thus have a greater value outside the home. They marry later, have fewer children and are better able to influence family decisions. In Africa, Asia and Latin America, as the number of years of completed schooling for women increase, their total fertility rate and their desired family size each decline. Across countries the level of maternal schooling is the strongest predictor of fertility decline.

However, the policy implications of these correlations are not straightforward. There appear to be 'threshold effects' associated with the impact of schooling on fertility. In some patriarchal settings, the possession of primary schooling is insufficient to help postpone the age of marriage. Second, the relationship appears stronger in more developed and urban settings. Third, there are other community effects: for example the impact on individual behaviour in India appears to depend on how widely female education is spread within communities. Finally, where sexuality and the politics of reproduction are socially determined, the impact of schooling on fertility will be heavily influenced by this context. Thus the relationship between girls' education and subsequent fertility is not straightforward and is mediated by different variables.

Sources: Heward (1999); Jeffery and Jeffery (1998); Schultz (1995).

educational attainment for girls (Bhat, 2002, cited in Kabeer, 2003a), and gender equity is stronger in societies with low fertility (Dyson, 2002).

In East Asia, by reducing the conflict between domestic responsibilities and work, later marriage and fewer children have facilitated women's entry into the labour market (Bauer, 2001). Having fewer children is also associated with women's greater continuity of employment, with positive implications for their earnings and occupational choice, and for employers' willingness to train them.³ In addition, longer female life expectancy has increased women's incentive to work by extending the post-child-rearing phase of their lives. In India, women who reported contraceptive use also reported higher likelihood of school attendance by all their children. This may have reflected an attitudinal difference – women who use contraception are likely to be predisposed towards education – or it may indicate causal relationship, with control being exercised over reproduction in order to afford investment in education (Bhat, 2002, cited in Kabeer, 2003a).

equal rates. Low birth and death rates have long been established in developed countries, where life expectancy over 1995–2000 was 74.8 and the total fertility rate was 1.58.² In the developing world, life expectancy increased from 47.7 to 62.5 between 1960/65 and 1995/2000. Total fertility fell from 6.03 to 3.11 during the same period. However, in the developing world, there are large interregional, inter-country, and even intra-country, variations in both the timing of the onset of the transition and in its pace of change (Box 4.3).

The education of women is widely believed to contribute to the demographic transition, by raising the opportunity costs to women of having children, and by changing their knowledge and aspirations. The relationships here, however, are not unambiguous (Box 4.4), and the causal process can also work from the opposite end. Thus, smaller families leave women freer to pursue other previously unattainable activities, such as education and employment. In South Asia, larger family size reduces the likelihood of school attendance for both boys and girls, but to a greater extent for the first-born and for girls: the oldest child is often required to supplement the family income or, particularly for girls, to look after younger siblings. Larger family size reduces

This type of evidence on the positive consequences of fertility decline for women's non-domestic roles is summarized in Figure 4.1, which shows the relationship between the UNDP gender empowerment measure (GEM) and the total fertility rate for the most populous countries having data for both indicators. The GEM is designed to measure gender equity in economic and political activity. Overall, lower fertility is associated with increased women's empowerment in these areas. It is noticeable that the highest values of the GEM are clustered in countries with below-replacement levels of fertility.

Moreover, there is no direct relationship between declining fertility and the expansion of women's non-domestic roles. Many factors temper the relationship. For example, in Zimbabwe (one of sub-Saharan Africa's most demographically advanced countries), women's opportunities in the economic, social and political spheres remain extremely limited despite fertility decline and substantial improvements in female education. Deteriorating economic conditions in Zimbabwe have adversely affected both women and men, and an increase in demand for contraception may in fact be poverty-driven, as many families cannot support additional children.

2. The total fertility rate is the average number of children a hypothetical cohort of women would have at the end of their reproductive period if they were subject during their whole lives to the fertility rates of a given period. It is expressed as the number of children per woman. A total fertility rate of 2.1, known as the replacement level of fertility, is required for a population to replace itself. Life expectancy is the average years of life expected by a hypothetical cohort of individuals who would be subject all their lives to the mortality rates of a given period. It is expressed in years (United Nations Population Division, 2002).

3. Evidence for developed countries also shows that childbearing impacts on women's earnings and occupational choice. For example, women may opt for occupations in which there are low penalties associated with temporarily leaving the market to have a child. See O'Neill (1985).

In such circumstances, women may have less to gain from fertility decline.⁴

Other cautionary notes are important. First, in contexts where son-preference is evident, as Chapter 3 discusses, fertility decline may actually lead to an *increase* in female disadvantage. The increased availability and use of pre-natal sex-selection technologies, in countries where daughters are not as desirable as sons, suggest this. Second, even where family size is declining, the costs of education may still serve as a factor constraining educational investment. Third, the demographic transition is also resulting in the ageing of populations across the world, albeit to varying degrees. Caring for elderly relatives may add to women's care burdens, with knock-on effects for daughters within the home (McNay, 2003).

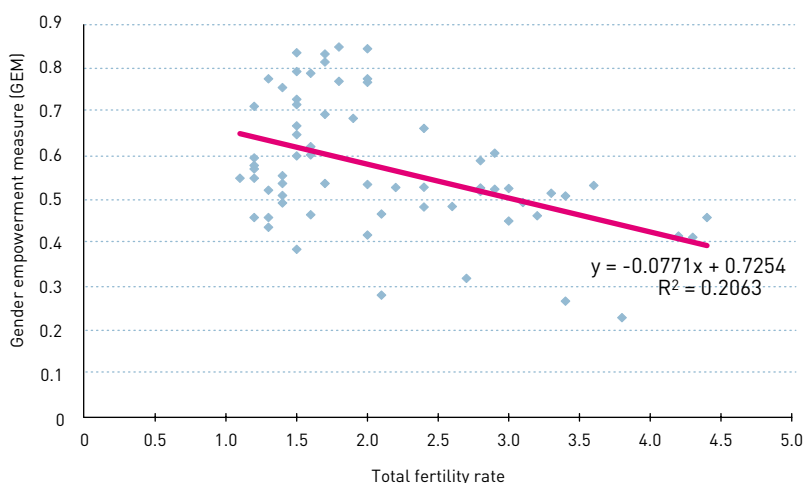
In South Africa and sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, the possibility that fertility decline may be associated with the HIV/AIDS epidemic is a further complicating factor. The impact of HIV/AIDS on fertility is not straightforward, but most demographers agree that the net effect is negative. HIV-positive women have lower fertility than HIV-negative women for both biological and behavioural reasons; they are more likely to be widowed or divorced, and less likely to remarry (Gregson et al., 2002). This manifestation of low fertility, therefore, is unlikely to have positive outcomes.

Decrypting social change

Thus, in many countries, processes of social change show that a range of factors can support gender equality. Increased female participation in the labour force can often be a trigger of change, gradually influencing social norms and perceptions of women's abilities and roles. Smaller families can make a big difference to women's time, either freeing them from housework to facilitate economic activity, or improving their child-free leisure. At the same time these social changes are sometimes a consequence of poverty, economic shock or crisis, rather than always reflecting women's greater autonomy or well-being.

Gender parity and equality in education therefore are best understood within this framework. Greater access to education can support and, in turn, be strengthened by these trends. There is no single 'magic bullet'.

Figure 4.1. Relationship between total fertility rate and gender empowerment measure in various countries (2000)



Note: Total fertility rate data are for 1995–2000, gender empowerment measure data are for 2000.
Source: UNDP (2002a).

Nevertheless, even a cursory understanding of history indicates the importance of purposeful actions, by the state and other agents, to weaken the forces leading to gender inequalities, and to address some of their root causes. Education can be an important lever of change in this respect.

History indicates the importance of purposeful action by the state.

Making public policy fit for girls

The state's role is important in at least three principal ways: *creating the enabling environment* for promoting female education through legislative and policy reform for gender equality; *investing in redistribution*, by allocating targeted resources for female education and special measures to reduce inequities; and *introducing educational reforms which respond to the particular circumstances of girls and women*. These will include measures to mitigate the burden of external shocks on women, such as the effects of conflict, economic crisis and HIV/AIDS, as well as more gender-focused educational reforms. In what follows, the focus is primarily on educational measures, though some of the broader measures that are important to support progress towards gender equality in education are indicated. Thus actions to promote gender parity and equality in education need to

4. See Mhloyi and Mapfumo (1998). For more evidence that fertility decline may sometimes be poverty-driven, or at least occur at low levels of socio-economic development, and therefore be less likely to bring advantages for women, see Sathar and Casterline (1998), for Pakistan, and Swartz (2002), for South Africa.

Legislative change and reform are critical for gender equality.

be nested within a wider set of measures aimed at promoting gender equality.

Creating an enabling environment

Legislative change and reform are critical for an enabling environment for gender equality. Legal measures to ensure that women enjoy rights to non-discrimination and the protection of fundamental freedoms are necessary bases for gender equality. Property rights, inheritance rights and establishment of gender equality in family law are all crucial cornerstones for securing economic and social justice for women. Many countries provide examples of the ways in which legislative change can underpin changes in the sphere of education. Costa Rica, for example, has legislated to eliminate sexist stereotypes and practices that legitimize gender inequalities in the education system. Its Act for Promoting the Social Equality of Women in 1990 made all educational institutions responsible for guaranteeing equal opportunities for men and women, which led to the creation of a Gender Equity Office in the Ministry of Public Education in 2000.

In Bangladesh, compulsory education and administrative and curriculum reform were introduced in the early 1990s. These actions together laid the foundation for a massive expansion in educational provision, which was particularly successful for girls.

In the United Kingdom, a number of legislative and policy developments led to the achievement of formal 'gender parity' in education. The earliest significant development was the Education Act of 1944, which established the principle of free secondary education for all. The raising of the school-leaving age to 16 in 1972 was important, although girls had in any case traditionally stayed on in school longer than boys. Increasingly, however, the contradiction between a 'domestic' education for girls and the new job opportunities for women focused attention on the problem of unequal treatment of women at work, in the family and in the school. The women's movement prioritized gender equality in education as one of its manifesto goals. Anti-discrimination legislation was important in highlighting discrimination against women teachers or managers, in preventing discriminatory access to education institutions and courses, and in encouraging the adoption of

equality policies in schools and colleges, local government, examination boards and the inspectorate.⁵

Design of a well-articulated and mutually consistent policy framework is an important complement to legislation, if gender equality in education is to be achieved. Among many good examples is the case of Ethiopia. Consistent with current international targets, Ethiopia's Education and Training Strategy placed emphasis on achieving universal primary education by 2015 (Transitional Government of Ethiopia, 1994a). The country has been striving to achieve this goal, with considerable progress being made in recent years. It is also evident that gender issues have received high priority in Ethiopian education policy since its new government came to power in the early 1990s. A specific objective of the Education and Training Strategy was to use education to change attitudes towards the role of women in development. This included giving attention to gender issues in curriculum design, placing special emphasis on the recruitment, training and assignment of female teachers, and giving financial support to raising the participation of women in education. Furthermore, the National Policy for Ethiopian Women (Transitional Government of Ethiopia, 1994b) specified strategies to ensure that women received vocational guidance at all institutions of education, had access to the same curricula as men, and were free to choose their field of study.

Supportive strategies were also identified outside the remit of education. These included encouraging women to take up jobs in the civil service and to participate in decision-making at both community and national levels. Communities were informed of the harm done by some traditional practices, such as circumcision and marriage of girls before they reach puberty. In support of this, the government's Population and Social Policy aims to increase the minimum age at marriage for girls from the current age of 15 to 18 years (equal to that of boys). It also emphasizes the importance of giving special support to the education of women and of ensuring equal employment opportunities (Transitional Government of Ethiopia, 1994c). Taken together, and if implemented effectively, these measures should help to increase the demand for the schooling of girls (Rose 2003a).

5. More generally, several laws have been enacted which have provided direction for change. The Equal Payment Act 1970, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976, Protection from Harassment Act 1997, and the Human Rights Act 1988 have in various ways contributed to confirming the state's commitment to gender equality in a variety of spheres.

Mainstreaming gender into institutions

Since the United Nations Decade for Women (1976–85), the demand for governments to address women's needs in development has resulted in 'women's issues' being integrated into projects and policy-making institutions. The state has been a primary focus of women's advocacy, not least because historical lessons show the importance of public actions by the state in expanding opportunities for women.

Despite the vital role played by the state, actions have not been automatic. International solidarity forged through United Nations activities and conferences strengthened the hand of women's movements in making demands.

Several countries have created special mechanisms to address gender equality in education. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the establishment of the Bureau of Women's Affairs (affiliated with the Office of the President) in the early 1990s, replaced by the Center for Women's Participation in 1997, resulted from an initiative to focus on the condition of women, to address their concerns and increase their participation in various arenas, including education. The Center set up special women's units in government ministries and organizations, among which was the Bureau of Women's Affairs at the Ministry of Education. The mandate of the latter is to 'campaign against undesirable gender attitudes' (PBO, 1999, p. 91). The Bureau organizes workshops and seminars at all levels of the Ministry of Education to raise awareness of the need for gender sensitivity in schools, among teachers and school administrators. It finances research on the impact of gender stereotyping in textbooks and gender discrimination in the curriculum.

National mechanisms however, have encountered a range of constraints, which have rendered them somewhat ineffective. The marginalization of many of these units within large departments resulted from under-resourcing of staff, skills and funding, 'and from being given responsibilities insufficient to securing gender-transformative policy change' (Goetz, 1998, p. 42). Without proper budgetary allocations, these units have often failed to make an impact on national development planning (Box 4.5).

Box 4.5. Mainstreaming gender: have adequate resources been allocated?

A report on follow-up actions to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), found that in twenty-seven countries (less than one-third of those reporting) the budget for women's programmes had grown since 1995. Increases ranged from 6% in India to 25% in New Zealand and 34% in Luxembourg. In an almost equal number (twenty-eight), the budget remained unchanged. In the remainder, budget cuts since 1995 ranged from an average of 20% (Germany) to a crippling 60% (Guatemala). In Canada, the national budget for women's programmes was cut from C\$12 million before 1990 to C\$8.1 million in 1998, or less than C\$1 per woman and girl. For the most part, the budget for women's programmes represents a very small – and often insignificant – percentage of the national budget.

Some governments, including those of New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States, have pointed to the difficulties of assessing the budget for women's programmes because of the lack of gender-disaggregated data or of 'mainstreaming' policies that call for gender-responsive expenditures by all ministries and departments.

On the other hand, a sectoral analysis of government spending can be revealing. In South Africa, budgetary cuts had a negative impact on land reform, affecting women most. The agriculture budget continues to support commercial farmers at the expense of micro-farmers, who are mainly women. Over half of the energy budget went to the Atomic Energy Corporation rather than to the electrification of communities.

In other cases, such as Mexico, the women's department is reported to be part of a larger social development structure and unable to command a proportionate share of the budget for women's programmes.

Source: WEDO (1998).

Political backing is crucial for the introduction of policy reforms affecting gender equality. But effective implementation needs more than this. As indicated above, in Ethiopia, gender issues were championed by the long-serving Minister of Education, who was committed to incorporating gender into education policy. This meant that processes were established to ensure that gender issues were addressed at all levels of the system, with women's affairs officers appointed to both the central and regional (and sometimes also district) education offices. However, implementation has been patchy. This is partly due to insufficient clarity about responsibilities for monitoring gender and education strategies and to a lack of budgetary allocations. Consequently, gender strategies have not been mainstreamed into, the planning and implementation process (Rose, 2003a).

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The scarcity of women in senior positions puts them under pressure to conform.

Hostility to women's interests is often manifest within organizations, even including those with a mandate for implementing gender equality policies. Such policies are seen as being imposed by an external authority, such as a funding agency. The lack of ownership may become a further reason for opposing such initiatives (Swainson et al., 1998). Aid agencies have nevertheless been instrumental in putting gender equality onto the agenda of governments, even if their own practice is inadequately gender-aware.

In Rajasthan, India, the Shikshakarmi (Education Workers) Project, which has a strong focus on gender inequalities in education, established a Women's Task Force to provide regular support to the women working within these programmes. It was recognized that women's authority was often overridden by men, who did not take them seriously. Members of the Task Force were to provide a link between field- and state-level workers aimed at creating an environment for heightened gender awareness. However, discussion with the Task Force members revealed that many officials at field level were not gender sensitive and did not 'value' their ideas and opinions. Some women felt that even state-level officers of the Shikshakarmi Project were marginalized in the Regional Review Meetings (Jain, 2003).

Gender sensitivity training is essential, but may not command support. The Punjab Middle Schools Project – run by the Government of Pakistan, the World Bank and the UK Department for International Development – aims at higher participation rates, particularly of females, in Grades VI to VIII in rural areas and in urban slum schools. The problem of lack of reference to gender in the project documentation was exacerbated by early attempts to introduce gender activities in the project. These early activities included workshops for senior Education Sector officers, to sensitize them in gender issues in middle schools, and to help develop project approaches. In the event, senior figures were made to feel inadequate in their understanding of gender issues. This resulted in their alienation and in no forward movement towards mainstreaming gender activities in the project (Sibbons, 1999).

Too few women within the government exacerbates the difficulties of putting forward women's perspectives. In any case, bureaucratic

organizations are often hostile to agendas that challenge accustomed patterns of working. While it cannot be assumed that all women share the same interests, or are necessarily champions of gender equality, the scarcity of women in senior positions puts them under pressure to conform, rather than to bargain for change.

Investing in redistribution

Reducing the costs of girls' education

The direct and indirect costs of schooling to households impede access to education for the most disadvantaged groups. Abolishing primary-school fees can have a major impact on boosting the enrolment of both girls and boys, as the experience of Malawi, Mauritius and many other countries can testify (Riddell, 2003; Bunwaree, 1999; see also Chapter 5). However, eliminating the fee aspects of direct costs is only one, albeit important, part of the challenge of achieving gender parity and equality in education. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, the opportunity costs of schooling are high – and often greater for girls than for boys, just as its perceived benefits are often less. Thus targeted interventions in favour of girls are required in order to equalize the chances of girls and boys attending school.

Measures to reduce child labour

The need for children to work – the source of the opportunity costs of school attendance – has been shown to be one of the most important causes of under-enrolment in school. Accordingly, measures to reduce or remove the need for child labour represent a potentially important means of increasing school enrolments among both girls and boys.

However, one weakness of most discussions of such policy interventions is that they fail to recognize the predominance of household employment among child workers. This reflects the strong media coverage given to children employed in export sectors such as the carpet, garment and sports-equipment industries. This emphasis typically leads to proposals for trade sanctions, for adherence to international labour standards and for minimum wages (Basu, 1999, 2000). Yet to the extent that the parents of child labourers are self-employed, an adult minimum wage will have, at best, indirect effects on child labour. Trade sanctions that involve banning the import of products made with child labour will have no direct effects on children who work on

subsistence farms. Legislation that bans child labour is especially difficult to monitor when children are employed in household-run or home-based activities. This is not to say that these kinds of legislative intervention are undesirable. Rather, it emphasizes that additional measures will be needed to reduce child labour substantially for most of the children involved, and particularly girls. The design of policy to address child labour depends on recognizing that most children work with or for their parents in economies where markets are underdeveloped and where the legal and political infrastructure is thin.

It is important, for the purposes of policy design, to distinguish between long-running policies and those which focus on more short-term objectives. The former address the big goals of poverty reduction, economic growth and reduced inequality. The latter target the poorest sections of society, being designed to help them to break out of poverty traps or to avoid falling into them.

To the extent that the main underlying cause of child labour is poverty, long-term strategies of poverty alleviation and elements of pro-poor growth policy are relevant to addressing child labour. Among these are measures that raise the productivity and hence the wages of adult labour.⁶ In addition, any measures that reduce discrimination in employment or wages against women will discourage child labour among girls, both directly (by reducing household poverty) and indirectly (by raising the returns to girls' education).

An emphasis on poverty leads, at least implicitly, to advocacy of policies that offer credit to poor households (e.g. Ranjan, 1999; Jafarey and Lahiri, 2002; Dehejia and Gatti, 2002), not least because they are seen as offering a way of 'enabling' rather than subsidizing the poor. But assessment of micro-credit schemes across the developing world suggests that they do help the poor but not the most poor. While they retain their relevance to one section of the poor, the very poorest will be helped more by large-scale public investments supporting both the supply of, and the demand for, education. This is not only 'enabling' by virtue of raising the productivity of the next generation, but it also generates a substantial social payoff.

Where the trade-off between the returns to work and the returns to schooling is the main influence on the volume of child labour, investments in the quality and availability of schooling will pay off. Further, for girls to reap the (pecuniary) benefits of their education over the long term, measures need to be taken to reduce labour-market discrimination against girls. As indicated in Chapter 3, studies from many developing countries show labour market segmentation with males and females typically doing different types of work. Where they are engaged in comparable work, girls and women appear to be paid lower wages than boys and men. Regulatory measures to stop such practices are difficult to enforce in rural economies. Thus social mobilization, education and the organization of women – combined, possibly, with monetary incentives to employers – are more likely to bring about an equalization of these differences than legislation per se. Declining fertility and rising living standards will undoubtedly assist the process of bringing women into the labour market. In view of widespread evidence that working women have a greater say in household decision-making and appear to spend more resources on children than do men, this may be expected further to encourage the education of the next generation of children. The new role models implied by these changes would be likely to lead to the impact on girls being larger than on boys.

Policies can be designed specifically to provide parents with incentives to send their children to school. Financial incentives, such as cash transfers to cover the foregone 'wage' of the child, may be relevant even where household poverty is not compelling. In such cases, it seems sensible to make these transfers conditional on school attendance. Incentives are particularly relevant if parents appear not to be considering the best interests of children, or if social norms prevent these from being acted upon. In such situations, incentives are likely to be required to persuade parents to make better choices regarding the use of their children's time.

Although it may not be intuitively obvious, offering pensions to the elderly can help to reduce child labour. It is not uncommon in developing countries for elderly parents to live with their children and grandchildren. In the absence of pensions, the younger adults make (implicit or explicit) income transfers to dependent elderly

Policies can be designed to give parents incentives to send their children to school.

6. Although the adult wage is often judged to be a key variable, too much emphasis can be placed on 'labour market reform': in most developing countries less than half of the able adult male population earn a regular wage. Most are self-employed. It is therefore more appropriate to think in terms of measures that raise labour productivity – these will range from provision of irrigation to offering support prices for agricultural products. In the longer term, education and training programmes will raise the skill level of the adult population, making children a poorer substitute for adult labour and, thereby, lowering the demand for child labour.

The vast majority of domestic child workers are girls.

parents which, on average, will reduce the resources available for children. Indeed, analysis of the operation of the old Poor Law in England suggests that the availability of old-age pensions had beneficial effects on children (see Smith, 1996). There is also contemporary evidence that the introduction of a state pension in Brazil was associated with a reduction in child labour (Carvalho, 2000), with the largest impact being on girls living in households where the grandmother received a pension.

A stronger response to parental choices that are undesirable for the child is legislative intervention. Caution is needed, however. For example, introducing a ban on child labour may well leave families (and children) worse off, if children's income was necessary for survival. Moreover, introducing a ban raises serious implementation issues in a society with limited legal and political infrastructure. The design of such a ban needs to take account of possible unintended consequences. For example, a law passed in India in 1986 that threatened to fine employers of child labourers in fact resulted in lower wages for children (Bhalotra, 2003). Furthermore, a partial ban may result in child workers moving from the protected to the unprotected sector, where conditions are typically worse (see Bachmann, 1998). On balance, total bans are likely to be more effective than partial bans, and they are particularly required for the worst forms of child labour (defined by the ILO to include hazardous work, prostitution, soldiering and other forms of extreme exploitation).

One major problem in assessing the degree to which policy change is required is that the extent of domestic child labour is largely unknown. Those involved in domestic work for households other than their own are variously estimated at 10% to 20% of all girl child labourers (ILO, 1996b, 1998, 2002a). However, a much larger number of girls are engaged in domestic work for their own households, very many of whom are having their rights – including their rights to education – infringed by these responsibilities. In Bangladesh and Nepal a recent study found that by the age of 10 it is not uncommon for girls to be working an average of ten hours per day. In Egypt it has been estimated that girls are responsible for 85% of all household chores. Other case studies exist (Global Campaign for Education, 2003a). Nevertheless, because much of this work

remains hidden, a priority is to increase the availability of data and knowledge about its extent and characteristics. International organizations have given some profile to the issue of child domestic labour through publications, lobbying and assisting the development of networks. Organizations such as the Visayan Forum in the Philippines work with employers and with child domestic workers themselves, to publicize their rights (Visayan Forum, 1997). However, this aspect of child labour is in need of more urgent attention than others, as the nature and extent of exploitation involved is more difficult to assess and combat. The vast majority of the children affected by it are girls.

Clearly, the range of measures available to reduce the incidence of child labour is large. Many of the available policies can increase the likelihood of both girls and boys being sent to school. Some, however, also allow the possibility of targeting in order to change the balance of incentives that lead to girls, in particular, being excluded from schools. Lessons from the use of three types of these targeting measures are briefly drawn below: scholarships, income-support schemes and school-feeding programmes.

Scholarships for girls

The Female Secondary School Stipend Programme in Bangladesh is one such initiative – focusing on secondary, rather than primary, schooling. Described as 'the world's vanguard programme of this type', there are lessons to be learned from its experience.

The objectives of the programme and the ways in which it operates are described in Box 4.6. Its impact is difficult to establish. Only one assessment is available, for the NORAD pilot project covering 780 girls who received stipends from 1986 to 1992. Other studies are planned. Isolating the effect of the stipend programme is difficult because of its interaction with other school improvement projects, such as teacher training and improved school management.

However, project completion reports strongly suggest that the effect on girls' enrolment has been substantial. In some project areas, the number of awardees has increased fivefold. In others there have been sharp increases, with girls overtaking boys. In 2002 the repetition rate in Grades 6–9 was under 4% for all students and

Box 4.6. Functioning of the Female Secondary School Stipend Programme, Bangladesh

The specific objectives of the Female Secondary School Stipend Programme are to increase girls' enrolment and retention in secondary schooling; to assist them in passing the Senior School Certificate (SSC) examination; to enhance their employment opportunities as primary-school teachers, extension workers, health and family planning workers and NGO workers; and to delay girls' marriage.

The programme was initiated in 1982 by a local NGO with USAID financial assistance, under the supervision of the Asia Foundation. The number of stipends awarded far exceeded the projected number at the time of its inception, and the number of schools involved increased by 12% within four years of project life. Largely on the basis of the above 'success', in January 1994 the Bangladesh Government launched a nationwide stipend programme for girls in secondary school (Grades 6–10) in all 460 *upazilas* (sub-districts), including all *madrassas* (religious schools) of the country. Support was provided by the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation. Subsequently stipends were also provided to girls in higher secondary Grades 11–12. After the initial emphasis on closing the gender gap in access to secondary education, which constituted the first overriding aim of the programme, the project started a second phase that emphasized improving the quality of secondary education and securing its financial sustainability.

Under the programme, free tuition and stipends are awarded to all eligible female secondary-school students enrolled in recognized institutions outside the metropolitan areas. To be eligible for a stipend a girl must attend school for at least 75% of the days of the school year, she must achieve at least 45% marks on her evaluations and examinations and she must remain unmarried. These requirements reinforce the strategic goals of increasing access by paying part of the cost to parents and part to schools; of improving quality by increasing pressure for good performance; and of delaying girls' marriage to achieve social and demographic goals. Stipend amounts are the same for all girls, but vary by grade.

Stipends are awarded in two instalments per year directly to the girls through their accounts in *upazila* branches of a nationalized bank. If bank branches are more than 5 km from the school, bank officers open temporary booths at the school premises to allow girls to withdraw the stipend money. Girls open accounts, receive passbooks and cheque books and learn how to operate an account. Participating institutions receive tuition fees in two semi-annual instalments against each stipend awardee, together with three months' tuition for all recipients in Grade 10, to compensate for the period before the SSC examination.

Source: Mahmud (2003).

only 3% for girls. This exceeded the performance target of lowering the repetition rate to less than 5%. Attendance rates in Grades 6–10 reached 65% for both boys and girls.

Other positive impacts on girls are reported. The payment directly through girls' own bank accounts is an empowering experience. Girls recognize a new ability to break female stereotypes and gain access to employment. Quotations from case studies show girls from poor rural backgrounds have been able to gain jobs in business, to delay marriage in order to work and, for some women who had themselves been denied opportunities to study, get a chance to educate their daughters. These women variously refer to these opportunities as being both useful and symbolically important as recognition of women's rights to be educated (Pathmark Associates, 2001).

The advantages of the programme are manifold. As there is no selection of stipend awardees, the intervention is simple to implement. The system minimizes leakages and has few hidden costs as

school authorities are not directly involved, except for certifying compliance with stipend eligibility and performance criteria.

One weakness of the programme is an unintended exclusion of the poorest girls because the stipend is too low to cover all the costs of sending a girl to school. It has also failed to reach girls in underserved areas. Further, securing access of girls to secondary school will have limited meaning in the absence of improvements to the quality of schooling. A disturbing trend has been the declining performance in examinations. The Senior School Certificate (SSC) pass rate for girls dropped from 52% in 1998 to 45% in 2002, whereas the High School Certificate (HSC) pass rate fell from 37% to 27%. In both examinations the performance of girls is poorer than that of boys. Moreover, the drop-out rate for girls in Grades 6–10 remains very high (46%) compared with that of boys (39%).

The future of the programme is in question. Raising the stipend amount to mitigate some of the exclusionary effects cited above would

Scholarships can have a substantial effect on girls' enrolment.

Cambodia has a national programme of scholarships for girls and ethnic minorities for Grade 6–7 transition.

escalate costs. There are also information gaps, which make assessment of the impact of targeting difficult. While donors support the replacement of the universal stipends for girls with further targeting by socio-economic need, the Government of Bangladesh is reluctant to target more sharply. This is partly because of the political difficulty of reducing the coverage of a universal programme, and partly in anticipation of the management costs and potential for corruption that may arise. In fact, the government is actually considering extending the scheme to poor boys, based on pressure from local communities. Thus, tensions between expanding coverage and achieving more effective targeting arise, which may have a negative impact on the future of the programme.

Other models also exist. In Cambodia, a national programme of scholarships has been developed for girls and ethnic minorities for Grade 6–7 transition. The programme strategy has been evaluated in co-operation with two local NGOs, and will be implemented through provincial and district education offices. It specifically aims to improve equity and gender parity by ensuring the transition of girls and ethnic minorities from poor rural and remote provinces of the country through secondary education and subsequently to post-secondary education. The scholarship will not only cover newly enrolled girls, but will also give assistance to poor girls who are already enrolled in lower-secondary school but who are at risk of dropping out due to high costs. The scholarships for ethnic minority children will also support extra costs for board and lodging, where appropriate. The programme will target 15,000 beneficiaries, of whom 95% will be girls (Velasco, 2003).

This affirmative action programme has a gender-strategic objective of creating many role models from disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, who may effectively alter the gender and cultural biases that exclude them from equal access to education and from other development opportunities.

In 2000, Kampuchean Action for Primary Education (KAPE) (Bredenburg et al., 2003) piloted a girls' scholarship programme at lower-secondary level in Cambodia. The programme, funded by USAID through the Asia Foundation, provided multiple support packages for poor girls in Grade 6 and allowed them to continue their

studies until the end of the lower-secondary school cycle (Grade 9). The project was piloted in four districts of Kompong Cham province. One of the support packages provides assistance for room and board for those girls who live more than 15 km from a secondary school. An important characteristic is that it does not rely on the provision of costly dormitories, but rather on placing girls with foster families in which the mother is the teacher. Not only are these arrangements more conducive to health and social development, but they also provide a positive female role model for girls. In keeping with government policy to promote pro-poor interventions that increase educational access, programme beneficiaries are selected primarily on the basis of need.

An important assumption tested by this pilot programme was whether subsidies for direct educational costs would be enough to address both the critical needs for girls to enrol in lower-secondary school and for them to remain there. With success rates at between 90% and 95%, this initially seems to have been the case at the pilot stage.

Income support schemes

Income transfer programmes in Brazil that provide cash to poor families whose children (between ages 7 and 14) attend school have been fairly successful. Child labour in Brazil is estimated to occupy 9% of the school-age group. However its incidence is four times greater among the poorest 20% of the population than among the richest quintile (World Bank, 2001).

Since 1995, the Brazilian Government has initiated several progressive education reforms (Box 4.7) in an attempt to improve elementary public education. The largest of these is Bolsa-Escola, a national programme that attempts to address high drop-out rates by providing income subsidies to families with school-age children on condition that each child attends school at least 90% of the time. This is potentially significant in that while enrolment rates are high, 63% of children drop out before finishing primary school (Denes, 2003). The cash transfers for each child are paid directly to their mothers, in recognition that they tend to spend more of their available income on the family than do men. Since 1995, when the first programmes were implemented in Campinas and Brasilia, the programme has expanded to include around fifty-eight

Box 4.7. Getting children out of work and into school in Brazil

The Child Labor Eradication (PETI) Programme, initiated in 1996 in rural areas of Brazil, aims to increase educational attainment, reduce poverty and eradicate the 'worst forms' of child labour. It provides stipends of approximately R\$25 per month to poor families who have working children aged 7–14; resources are given to the mothers of the beneficiaries. In order to be eligible, all school-age children in the family must attend school, participate in after-school activities, and agree not to work. After-school activities are a way of ensuring that children do not mix school and work. This targeted programme is supported by rural worker unions, which assist in the selection of children and in monitoring its impact. By 1999 the programme had reached 166 municipalities in eight states, covering an estimated 131,000 children.

A similar scheme, the Minimum Income Assurance Programme (Funda Garantia de Renda Mínima – FGRM), was established by the Ministry of Education to provide financial aid and technical support to municipalities having per capita income and tax revenues less than the state average. Again, all beneficiaries – who were selected from among the poorest families – were required to demonstrate the school attendance of all their children between the ages of 6 and 15. The programme was financed in part from federal funds and in part from municipalities' tax revenues. By the turn of the century, the Ministry of Education estimated that the FGRM had benefited 1 million children

in more than 500,000 families. The funding for the FGRM was significantly increased to US\$850 million for 2001, aiming to reach almost 11 million children.

Scaling up the child labour initiatives

In September 2000 the government merged the above two programmes with the Bolsa-Escola programme (see text), which had 2 million beneficiaries in 2000 under an umbrella 'Alvorada Programme'.

Additionally, a new programme, Sentinela, was established under Alvorada to reduce child prostitution. This programme targets at-risk children aged 7–14 from families with income of less than half the minimum wage. By providing US\$20 to each child and a further US\$12 per child per month for attending after-school activities, the government aimed to reach 8,500 children working in the sex industry. The preventive measures included a national campaign to raise awareness, annual state-level seminars, and workshops for programme co-ordinators regarding the gravity of the problem of prostitution. The combative measures included co-ordinating plans with councils, facilitating access to social services, and guaranteeing interaction between families, schools and the community. An evaluation system is in place to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme.

Source: Gustafsson-Wright and Pyne (2002).

municipalities and four states with an estimated 2 million beneficiaries (Denes, 2003; Caccio-Bava, n.d.).

The Bolsa-Escola programme was established nationally in 2000. Studies conducted during its expansion phase, between 1995 and 1999, show sharp reductions in school drop-out rates and increased enrolments in post-primary education. Further, the involvement of children aged 10–14 in child labour has decreased by 36% in Brasilia. Positive impacts on poverty and income have been recorded, and qualitative interviews with parents indicate that household expenditure on welfare goods has also increased. Another positive effect of Bolsa-Escola stems from the dependability of the monthly income subsidy, which contrasts with the uncertain receipts from informal sector work. The consistent supplement gives families access to previously unattainable sources of credit and is reported to have stimulated financial planning. Although the amount of the subsidy is less than the expected income from child labour, its dependability,

together with the reduction in violence and health problems associated with work in the informal sector, outweighs the loss of income for most families (Gustafsson-Wright and Pyne, 2002).

School feeding programmes

Food incentives, provided as meals or snacks at school or dry food rations to take home, can also make a significant contribution to increasing the enrolment and retention of girls in school. Food acts as an incentive by providing a real income transfer to families of students: when children receive a meal at school, their families need to feed them less at home. Similarly, when food rations are distributed directly to families in exchange for the schooling of their daughters, they need to purchase less food (or they can sell the food for cash).

What is the evidence of the impact of school feeding programmes on gender inequality? According to a study of the national Food for Education (FFE) programme in Bangladesh, enrolment in FFE government schools increased

Food incentives can make a significant contribution to increasing the enrolment and retention of girls in school.

Box 4.8. The Food For Education (FFE) programme in Bangladesh

Food for Education (FFE) is an 'in-kind' stipend programme begun in 1993, linking monthly food transfers for poor households to the enrolment of their children in order to achieve four key objectives: increased school enrolment, better school attendance, lower drop-out rates and higher quality of primary education (World Bank, 2002*d*). By 2000, the FFE pilot programme distributed 15 kg of wheat or 12 kg of rice per month to more than 2 million students in 17,811 public and private primary schools, accounting for about 27% of all primary schools in Bangladesh (IFPRI, 2001; USAID, 2002).

To qualify for the FFE programme, households must own less than half an acre of land, or have a household head who is disabled, a day labourer, or female. Any wage earners in the household must be in low-income jobs (IFPRI, 2001).

These targeting criteria mean a person from the lowest income quintile is about 2.5 times as likely to be selected for the programme as an individual from the richest quintile (World Bank, 2002*d*). This, however, implies that substantial errors of targeting are involved.

The rate of attendance reportedly increased sharply from 1993 to 1998 owing to the FFE programme (USAID, 2002;

Ravallion and Wodon, 1998). World Bank estimates suggest that the programme increased the probability of going to school by a little over 20% for both boys and girls. A preliminary investigation of the 2000 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) shows that these gains have been sustained. More recent studies (IFPRI, 2001) showed that student enrolments in FFE schools increased by 35% during the first year of the programme with those of girls increasing by 44%, in comparison with 28% for boys. By contrast, enrolment in non-FFE schools increased by about 7% during the period. Moreover, only 6% of the FFE beneficiary students dropped out between 1999 and 2000, compared with 15% of the children who did not receive benefits.

While no data are available to link the FFE initiatives to a reduction in poverty, the evidence does show that between 1992 and 1995 the FFE programmes decreased marriage rates for adolescent girls from 36% to 32%, as a consequence of a requirement that beneficiary parents sign a bond promising that their daughters will not marry before the age of 18.

Source: Fransman et al. (2003).

by 41% for girls, compared with 27% for boys between the inception of the programme and the end of its first year. In contrast, the enrolment increase at non-FFE government schools during the same period was 5.4% for girls and 0.1% for boys (see Box 4.8) (Ahmed and del Ninno, 2002). An evaluation of a school feeding programme in India carried out in the early 1980s found that enrolment rates in programme districts had increased by 10.4% for girls and 6.4% for all students over a five-year period, whereas in non-programme districts the increase was 7.9% for girls and 9.7% for all students.⁷ In another study from India, female school participation was found to be about 15 percentage points higher when the local school provided a midday meal than when it did not. Enrolment of boys was much less responsive to this facility. The availability of midday meals also had a major positive effect on girls' grade attainment. The chances of completing primary education were found to be 30 percentage points higher for girls living in villages with a midday meal scheme than for other girls (Drèze and Kingdon, 1999).

Another study from India again observed that, in areas with school feeding, retention rates

between Grades 1 and 5 were higher for girls than for boys, whereas the reverse was true in areas without school feeding (Laxmaiah et al., 1999). In the Dominican Republic, the withdrawal of a school-feeding programme was found to affect girls relatively more than boys. In a cohort of rural first-graders, enrolment dropped by 43% for girls and 19% for boys. The negative effects on girls were most significant in the lower four grades and in rural areas (Gall et al., 1986, cited in Levinger, 1986).

In spite of these promising results, several important issues emerge in relation to food-based support/incentive programmes. The co-ordination and management required is demanding. Communities need to be alert to whether they are receiving their entitlements. It is necessary to ensure that resources meant for distribution to the poorest are not captured by other groups, and that the quality of the grains offered is not compromised. Equally, the potential trade-off between resources spent on the programme and resources that could be spent on improving the quality of education needs to be assessed.

7. Gupta and Kom Horn (1984); note that the figures reflect cumulative effects of school feeding, which started in the 1960s.

For food-incentive programmes to be effective, some conditions must be met. First, if food is offered as an incentive, it will be most effective among the poor, who typically allocate 65% to 70% of their income to food (World Bank, 1992, cited in World Food Programme, 1999). Proper targeting is therefore the key (Levinger, 1986) but is not always easy to achieve. In the case of Bangladesh, a substantial part of the FFE programme allocation was not received by its intended beneficiaries (USAID, 2002). Girls were reported not to receive equal rations to boys, and many families received less food from the FFE programme than they were entitled to. In addition, below-age children were sometimes registered and some parents enrolled children in two or three neighbouring schools, causing double counting and distortion of enrolment figures. As a result of these difficulties, the Government of Bangladesh decided to drop the food ration programme in favour of monetary stipends.

Second, local communities and parents need to be responsible for the management of food incentive programmes. In Bangladesh, the responsibility for food distribution under the FFE programme was shifted from School Management Committees to private dealers, in order to free teachers' time for teaching. However, this was one of the main causes of malpractice and food losses (Ahmed and del Ninno, 2002). Insufficient community involvement and knowledge about the programme was identified as one of the key reasons for the erratic implementation and limited results of the national midday meal scheme in India (Meir, 2001). Community involvement in the management of food incentive programmes not only improves their functioning, but it can also serve as an opportunity to strengthen community/school relations in general (Levinger, 1986) and for communities to take more responsibility for girls' education (World Food Programme, 2000). The participation of women is particularly important in this context.

Third, where the need for child labour and availability of employment opportunities for children coexist, school feeding programmes are likely to act as incentives for school attendance only when the ration size is large enough to be viewed by parents as constituting a significant income-transfer. In such circumstances, it might even be desirable for children to take part of the ration home (Levinger, 1986).

Fourth, food incentives to support enrolments need to be part of more comprehensive packages of interventions for girls' education (school construction, improvements in school infrastructure, female teacher training, elimination of gender stereotypes in curricula and teaching materials, etc.). Where incentives and cost subsidy programmes have their intended effect of improving demand and enabling access, the quality of schooling is likely to be affected. In the case of the FFE programmes, for example, school quality actually decreased largely because of increased enrolment and class attendance rates, which led to the overcrowding of FFE school classrooms compared with others. While there are sixty-two students per teacher in non-FFE schools, on average, FFE schools had seventy-six students per teacher. Deteriorating levels of quality also had an adverse effect on levels of achievement (IFPRI, 2001).

We can conclude that school feeding programmes can provide useful incentives to enrol in and attend school, which seem to promote greater gender parity. On the other hand, experience shows the danger of these measures being mistargeted. Moreover, their cost-effectiveness has not yet been fully demonstrated in comparison with other incentive-based approaches.

Gender perspectives in educational reform

Schools are places where young people grow up, learn about the world and the society in which they live, form identities and imagine their futures. Measures to improve the experience of schooling for both girls and boys require a gender perspective in the design of schooling interventions. This includes relatively mundane issues – such as the fact that the process of getting to school may itself be a challenge, given concerns for safety and security, where schools are located at some distance from home. More fundamentally, the quality of the schooling experience for many children is often replete with threats – or may simply not be interesting enough to hold the attention of the child. Often children re-entering school do so under stigmatized or exceptional circumstances – as in the cases of child soldiers, disabled children, pregnant girls or young mothers, or those from families disrupted by HIV/AIDS. The quality of

Local communities and parents should be in charge of food incentive programmes.

In many countries pregnant girls face expulsion from formal education.

teaching may be poor, and the curriculum full of messages that reinforce gender difference and suppress the aspirations of young people. Ensuring that education does not fail children requires paying attention to the 'softwares' of change, the mechanisms whereby schooling becomes an enjoyable and equitable experience.

Change does not require only the investment of resources to develop infrastructure, it also needs investment in consultation, community participation and the creative development of solutions. Good examples of this come from Rajasthan in India, where community initiatives have enabled girls who would otherwise miss out on school to attend. In the Shikshakarmi Project, a *mahila sahyogi* (woman helper/escort) is appointed to enable young girls to attend school. The *mahila sahyogi* is a local woman who collects these children from their homes, escorting them to the school and back. She also provides childcare during school hours. With this additional support, girls' attendance at schools receives a boost (Jain, 2003).

These and other simple measures can contribute to change, and point to directions for the design of gender-aware interventions, adapted to local needs and requirements.

Addressing the needs of pregnant girls

In many countries pregnant girls face expulsion from formal education. At times this also affects the rights of teachers, who may face suspension or dismissal if they become pregnant, especially when they are unmarried (CEDAW, 1996, paras. 113–16). There is, nevertheless, increasing debate as to why pregnant girls should be discriminated against in this way. An example comes from Colombia. The Constitutional Court in Bogotá stated of the placement of a pregnant girl in less intensive tutorials (against her will), 'surely, the stigmatization and discrimination implied in the suspension from school attendance have converted this method of instruction [limited tutorials] into a disproportionate burden which the pupil has to bear solely because she is pregnant, which, in the opinion of the court, amounts to punishment. The transformation of pregnancy – through school regulations – into grounds for punishment violates fundamental rights to equality, privacy, free development of personality, and to education'.⁸

Elsewhere, non-governmental organizations, such as the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), have exposed the discriminatory treatment of pregnant girls in a range of countries. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child explicitly recognizes the right of the pregnant girl to an education.⁹ In response, some countries, including Botswana, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi and Zambia now permit the re-entry of girls into formal education after pregnancy. Nevertheless, this sometimes only holds for the twelve months immediately following the birth, and may be subject to other limitations, notably that the girl may not re-enter the same school (CEDAW, 2000, p. 13). In such circumstances it may still be questioned as to whether pregnancy is, in fact, being treated as a disciplinary offence.

National reports to the United Nations committees responsible for monitoring the realization of human rights are instructive. While one country has admitted to having 'no educational policy in this area', it admits that 'young [girls] may be expelled because of pregnancy, or be denied the opportunity to resume their education following childbirth' and the 'the main impetus for expelling pregnant students is pressure from the parents of other students' (CEDAW, 2000, p. 48). This indicates a clash between private discrimination and the public responsibility for the realization of the right to education of all, which lies with the state. In some countries having an apparently firm policy prohibiting the expulsion of pregnant girls, this may not extend to private schools. Yet others report 'great success' in enforcing wide-ranging legislation prohibiting the expulsion of pregnant girls (CEDAW, 1999). On the other hand, even where the legislation is in place, special efforts aimed at the girls themselves are often necessary, in order to encourage them to continue their education after pregnancy (Box 4.9).

Sexuality and reproductive health information for adolescents

The rights of pregnant girls do not just start with pregnancy. Much attention needs to be paid to issues of sexuality and to the processes associated with adolescence and young adulthood. In many countries, sex education is critically important to enable healthy relationships based on mutual respect and, particularly in contexts of HIV/AIDS, to promote

8. *Cristano Arcangel Martinez y Maria Suarez Robayo vs. Colegio Ciudad de Cali*, Case No. T-177814, 11 November 1998. Cited in Tomasevski (2001, p. 42).

9. The Charter has been in force since 29 November 1999. Article 11 (6) states: 'States Parties to the present Charter shall have all appropriate measures to ensure that children who become pregnant before completing their education shall have an opportunity to continue with their education on the basis of their individual ability', Organization of African Unity (1990).

Box 4.9. Costa Rica: Building Opportunities for young mothers

The 'Building Opportunities' programme aims to provide personal and social training to pregnant girls and to poor teenage mothers, with the aim of reintegrating this group and preventing them from dropping out of the formal education system. In its three years of operation, the programme has trained around 10,000 girls. Topics covered have included women's human rights, organization and leadership, gender-based violence, health-care issues and other rights-based topics.

Impact assessments indicate that the programme has succeeded in boosting the girls' self-images and abilities to make themselves heard and respected. They are reported to feel more at ease with themselves and have managed to set themselves long-term goals. Approximately 60% have returned to, or remained in, the education system. The involvement of civil society organizations in the programme as facilitators has enhanced the work methodology and provided follow-up of the girls after their training.

Source: Guzman and Letendre (2003).

relevant and useful information to young people about reproductive health. For women in particular, the knowledge and skills required to manage their sexual lives are vital.

Sex education, however, remains a taboo subject in the majority of countries. Efforts to introduce sex education in secondary schools have often been hindered by resistance from teachers and parents and by inadequate teacher training. As noted earlier, religious leaders often support parents in preventing contraception and sexuality from being addressed in schools, as examples from Poland (Magno et al., 2002), Chile (Avalos, 2003) and other countries in Latin America illustrate.

Despite such resistance, however, innovative programmes have been established, albeit sometimes modified to accommodate those who oppose these programmes. In Chile, the Ministry of Education and Women's National Service (SERNAM) established in 1996 a programme known as JOCAS, which was addressed to the secondary-school communities (teachers, parents and young students) and focused on conversations about sexuality and related issues. From 1991, schools were not allowed to expel pregnant girls and were obliged to continue to enrol them after they had become mothers. A few schools established nursery schools for girls to leave their babies (Avalos, 2003).

In Costa Rica, the 'Young Love' Programme was developed in 1999 to comply with the commitments of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the ICPD Programme of Action, all of which require

states to address sexual and reproductive health issues through education (as Chapter 1 shows). The programme provided boys and girls with sex education, and recognized that teenagers have the same fundamental rights as other age groups while requiring specific social policies and programmes to support them.

Its implementation, however, met with resistance and controversy, as a result of which emphasis is now given to providing information on sexual and reproductive health rather than to the discussion of broader ideas about the responsible exercise of sexuality (Guzman and Letendre, 2003).

In many other societies in South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, there is comparative silence on issues of sexuality and reproductive health, particularly during schooling. Female sexuality also remains a taboo subject, off the educational agenda. As Table 4.2 shows, however, some African countries have taken up the challenge of addressing these issues, perhaps as a palpable response to the HIV/AIDS crisis.

Preventing HIV/AIDS

In sub-Saharan Africa, almost 60% of those living with HIV/AIDS are girls and women. The WHO *World Report on Violence and Health* (2002) referring to studies in parts of Indonesia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe, suggests that 'up to one-third of adolescent girls report forced sexual initiation' (Leach, 2003). Adolescent sexual violence in schools is demonstrated by numerous other studies on HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. There

Sex education remains a taboo in most countries.

Table 4.2. Girl-centred education/policy projects

Title	Country	Organization	Goals/Activities	Target groups
Reducing Reproductive Health Barriers to Primary School Completion among Kenyan Girls	Kenya	Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization (MYWO), Academy for Educational Development (AED), Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Programmes (JHU/CCP)	The main goal of the project is to reduce the reproductive health barriers to primary school completion among girls. The project currently operates in a total of thirty-one communities in the districts of Bungoma, Kilifi, Koibatek and Kuria, and in the Nairobi slums. In May 1998, AED trained MYWO field workers and their supervisors from the five focus districts in Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) techniques.	Young girls
Girls' Power Initiative (GPI)	Nigeria	Gender Development Institute	To equip girls with human rights, reproductive health/rights information, leadership, economic and other life skills to cope with growing up, thus laying the basis for ensuring the enjoyment of healthy sexuality, womanhood and social justice for future generations of Nigerian women.	10–18-year-old girls
Nigerian Girls into Sciences (NGIS)	Nigeria	Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)	An action-oriented performance enhancement programme for girls at junior secondary level in Nigeria. The primary goal is to expand interest and improve performance in science among Nigerian girls, based on hands on, activity-based learning.	Girls at junior secondary level
Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET)	U.R. Tanzania	School Mapping Initiative, Ministry of Education and Culture of the United Republic of Tanzania, UNICEF	To give a second chance to those who could not continue with formal education. The COBET philosophy is no fees, no uniforms and no caning. The children decide when to start studying and when to end. Discipline is enforced through peer education, exposure to life skills knowledge and civics.	Orphans and children of single parents, especially girls
Centres of Excellence (FAWE)	Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal, U.R. Tanzania	Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)	To demonstrate how accumulated information, knowledge and experience can be used to formulate, implement and monitor policies and practices that promote girls' education. The Centres of Excellence take an integrated approach to problem-solving by providing quality education for girls. Significant components of the Centres of Excellence programmes are: providing adequate physical facilities; providing adequate learning materials; awarding bursaries; relevant curriculum; skilled teachers; community sensitization; empowerment of girls; guidance and counselling.	Girls, parents, teachers, school administrators, communities, Ministry of Education, religious groups, donors, media, education providers, boys
African Girls' Education Movement (GEM)	Member states of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)	Global Children's Movement, UN Girls' Education Initiative, African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI), Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)	To create spaces for African girls to realize and concretize their right to participate in identifying problems, proposing solutions, determining what works and prioritizing issues that affect their education and consequently their life chances; provide opportunities for them to develop and exercise their leadership and technical skills; tap the potential of boys to work in partnership with girls to promote girls' education in Africa, and through education, create more equitable and just African societies.	Girls

Source: Mitchell (2003).

is clearly an important contradiction between the school as a location for high-risk sexual practice and the school as an effective forum for teaching about and encouraging safe sex. Teachers need to be properly trained, as HIV/AIDS becomes a compulsory part of the school curriculum (Box 4.10). Programmes in Botswana, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda and elsewhere have been established to empower girls and women and to sensitize men to the importance of respect, human rights and citizenship. In Nigeria, the Girls' Power Initiative, reaching 1,500 girls in twenty-eight schools, teaches strategies for girls to resist unwanted sex and to reach their full potential. Another programme, Conscientizing Male Adolescents, is

sensitizing Nigerian youth about the needs and rights of girls and women. These initiatives, focusing on youth awareness about reproductive health, link closely with initiatives to foster healthy self-images for young people, in an attempt also to tackle the roots of sexual violence.

Youth-centred projects to combat gender-based violence

The theme of gender-based violence cuts across many issues: poverty and transactional sex, lack of voice and fear of rape, human rights, heightened vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and others. Many programmes focusing on this theme have been pioneered in South Africa where the high

Box 4.10. South Africa: teachers' unions focus on HIV/AIDS

An important type of targeted approach is undertaken by teachers' unions and associations themselves. The South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) for example, has for a number of years had a gender officer and gender committee, which has helped to raise awareness about specific gender issues. The focus of SADTU in the 1990s was to help to create equal conditions of employment for female and male teachers (e.g. in relation to salaries and pensions) to rectify the lack of female teachers in leadership and management positions. The officers and committees reported a great deal of government resistance to dealing with gender issues.

More recently, the focus shifted to the impact of HIV/AIDS on teachers. Initiatives include:

- leading the Education International and World Health Organization collaborative HIV/AIDS project, together with the Ministries of Health and Education;
- a survey of the prevalence rates and impact of HIV/AIDS on teachers (with other research partners);
- life history research on teachers living with HIV/AIDS;
- negotiations with the Ministry of Education to ensure that HIV/AIDS becomes a compulsory part of the core curriculum for teachers undergoing pre-service training;
- campaigning for more attention to life skills teaching in the curriculum.

Source: Chisholm and McKinney (2003).

incidence of gender-based violence and of HIV/AIDS among young women between the ages of 15 and 24 suggests such a need. A Campaign on Eradicating Gender Violence in Schools, established in 2002, works with student bodies, which, in turn, develop activities at the level of individual schools. The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) in Johannesburg runs the Safe Schools programme, which focuses on building resilience among young people by exposing them to alternatives to violence and other negative behaviour. A further pilot project on Sexual Violence Education is designed to build awareness of the issue of gender-based violence.

Beyond the sphere of government, *Soul City*, a television drama series established by a national NGO with a focus on health (in particular HIV/AIDS) and other development issues, has been running for over ten years. Some of the *Soul City* materials are now used in other African countries and in parts of Asia and Latin America. Save the Children and UNICEF have used film to help boys in South Asia to question their views of gender and masculinity in order to develop more positive attitudes towards women and girls (Poudyal, 2000).

A common framework to tackle gender violence has also been produced by the Commonwealth Secretariat as part of a series of gender mainstreaming manuals. Action Aid's Stepping Stones is a widely used HIV/AIDS prevention programme. Originally designed for use with

illiterate rural communities in Africa using participatory methods, it has now been adapted and used in over a hundred countries in Asia, North and Latin America and Europe and has been promoted for use in schools. In Latin America, Save the Children has been working with health ministries in Brazil, Colombia and Peru, training young people as peer counsellors to work within schools on sexual and reproductive health issues from the gender perspective. In Nicaragua, the CANTERA organization runs workshops for men to explore their masculinity and develop skills in gender awareness. The Men Against Violence Group that flourished in Nicaragua has now spread to Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

Much of the most innovative work in countering school violence has been initiated by NGOs, often in connection with HIV/AIDS education. Most such initiatives, however, are small-scale and expensive, and have been developed outside the formal school setting – in part because ministries of education have been reluctant to address the issue of gender violence themselves.

Gender-based violence in schools exists in all parts of the world. Where school authorities have failed to acknowledge its existence it has often flourished and become institutionalized. In order to protect girl pupils from harassment, sexual assault and rape, vigorous action is needed, through broadly based action plans in co-operation with students, parents, teachers and school administrators.

The Men Against Violence Group that flourished in Nicaragua has now spread to Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

Box 4.11. Training teachers against violence in South Africa

The School of Public Health at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa has developed a model to incorporate the issue of gender-based violence into the primary school curriculum, piloting two training models – the ‘whole school’ approach and ‘train the trainer’ in six primary schools in Cape Town. The purpose of the training was to challenge the teachers’ own knowledge and attitudes towards gender-based violence and to identify strategies to address the problem.

Both models led to significant changes in the way teachers understood gender-based violence and in the role of schools to address the problem.

- Before the training 30% of teachers felt that schools could play a meaningful role in addressing gender-based violence, and after the training 70% of teachers felt that to be so.
- 85% of teachers felt that gender-based violence was a significant problem in their own schools, and all of them believed that the school curriculum should include content on gender-based violence starting at Grade 5 (age 9–10).

Source: ID21 website.

Teachers are key actors for change. They are role models for schoolchildren. However, for them to address gender-based violence in schools many teachers need to understand and confront their own experiences. The role of

teachers as perpetrators of abuse is highlighted in the most recent Human Rights Watch report on sexual violence in South African schools (Human Rights Watch, 2001a). Counter strategies clearly also need to address the attitudes of the teachers themselves (Box 4.11).

Working with teachers

Reforms to help teachers become agents of gender equality have varied according to time and context but appear to be related to the presence or absence of broader feminist and women’s movements.

The presence of strong feminist movements during the 1970s and 1980s in the United Kingdom, Australia and other industrialized countries helped to focus initiatives on girls’ participation in mathematics, science and technology, and on the creation of ‘girl-friendly’ environments in schools (Box 4.12). These have possibly led to a ‘narrowing of the gender gap’ (Arnot et al., 1999), although some commentators have emphasized the emotional complexity of gender reform in schools (Kenway et al., 1998). In Africa, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) has facilitated initiatives aimed at enhancing girls’ access to and participation in schools.

Box 4.12. Educational feminism in the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, ‘educational feminism’ was central to the post-war era of social democracy. The 1980s was a ‘pivotal decade’ for feminist projects in education in which gender-aware, often highly politicized, teachers became pioneers of anti-sexist and ‘girl-friendly’ education.

At its strongest, the motto of ‘equality of opportunity for all’ called for equality of outcome and gender equality in society. At its weakest, it encouraged the removal of obstacles, barriers and restrictions on girls’ choices. These political platforms were hotly debated in public through the school system and in the media. For girls, in particular, it led to questioning the nature of conventional femininity within the ‘safe haven’ of the school and broadening their horizons. Research suggests that it encouraged girls to adopt a more individualized but also a more positive and independent approach to their schooling and future lives.

Girl-friendly schooling practices were encouraged by feminist initiatives particularly but not solely in the inner cities, in which municipal socialism supported gender equality.

Teachers promoted strong curriculum and school subject networks, they engaged in institutional research projects with the help and collaboration of higher-education academics, and they activated gender equality policies in teachers’ unions, local education authorities and schools. The initial priority was to raise gender awareness through the use of legislation, in-service courses for teachers, managers and policy-makers, the collection of relevant evidence, and the provision of guidance materials. New careers in equal opportunities were established through gender equality responsibility posts in schools, local authorities and education agencies. Schools set up working parties and by the 1980s were able to support specific gender initiatives through vocational training budgets. Gender monitoring of patterns of performance and school cultures became common elements in school development plans and school inspection regimes and, to a limited extent, initial teacher education courses have taken gender into account.

Source: Arnot and Phipps (2003).

Initiatives taken to make teachers agents of change for gender equality need to be seen in context. Gender issues in schools are generally deeply embedded in social norms. Changing unequal access to schools, participation and performance while in them, and finally outcomes, requires not only that in-school issues and participants are addressed, but also that non-school issues are focused on. As a result, teachers have mainly been targeted alongside other groups, rather than simply on their own. This is especially the case in developing countries, where gender and education programmes tend not to focus exclusively on teachers but on schooling more generally, addressing a broader range of participants including ministries, school managers, parents and the community. Whatever approach is used, results have generally been mixed, sometimes leading to change and sometimes to resistance. The strengths and limitations of different approaches are context-dependent and can be examined most clearly in relation to examples of particular efforts and reforms.

Approaches to gender equality in the classroom focus on relationships between boys and girls and on the relationship between learners and teachers. They address:

- gender stereotypes, i.e. challenging stereotypical views such as girls being unable to benefit from secondary education or less able to succeed in mathematics and science;
- sexual violence, abuse and harassment – raising awareness of these issues and using teachers to raise awareness of learners’;
- differential enrolment of boys and girls in school;
- ideologies underlying the curriculum;
- curriculum choices – e.g. encouraging girls to take mathematics, science and technology subjects;
- teaching styles, including differential attention paid to boys and girls;
- school organization and discipline – making schools more girl-friendly;
- extramural activities – providing sporting opportunities for girls as well as boys.

Teachers are critical to all these areas. They can provide role models and a sense of direction and encouragement to boys and girls, or they can denigrate and marginalize them and so perpetuate stereotypes.

Teachers cannot be expected to separate themselves easily from the powerful cultural and social norms of their society. In strongly patriarchal environments, it is not easy to involve teachers in gender equity programmes. Moreover, when they do become committed, they face powerful obstacles linked to the power of patriarchal values in determining their own lives, careers and activities (Mahlase, 1997). This problem is exacerbated by the neglect of gender in teacher training in many developing countries. In an attempt to address this problem, FAWE has set up Centres of Excellence in different sub-Saharan African countries to build the capacity of teachers (see Table 4.2), including courses on gender sensitization and awareness, training in gender-responsive methodologies and courses in the teaching of science, mathematics and technology (FAWE, 2003).

Teachers are critical to gender equality in the classroom.

Box 4.13. Change from Within: a Jamaican initiative

An initiative has been taken as part of the University of the West Indies’ Change from Within programme, aimed at promoting boys’ achievement in Jamaican schools. In a unique experiment, a group of primary- and secondary-school principals were encouraged to work together to improve their school environments. They faced a set of common problems all underpinned by the failure of Jamaican boys to succeed in education. Some of these challenges were boys’ lack of self-esteem, a growing problem of violence and indiscipline in schools, a problem of masculine identities moving boys away from valuing academic performance towards other compensatory and negative types of behaviour, and the reduction in job opportunities after students graduate.

Different schools responded in different ways, but some of the key strategies included:

- building on existing strengths: one primary school used its land to encourage boys to plant crops and improve their literacy through environmental learning;
- enlisting parental support for school activities by meeting some of their needs: one school, for example, was able to offer parents some employment;
- engaging with the community: schools drew on local talents, inviting storytellers and dancers into the school;
- using the arts as a means of building confidence, school pride, communication and motivation;
- running school guidance programmes to identify and solve personal problems.

Source: Sewell et al. (2003).

Discriminatory attitudes are not removed through a new curriculum.

More recently, second-generation feminists have focused on boys and masculinities on the basis that unless boys change, relationships between boys and girls and between men and women will not change. The expectation that girls alone should change does not address the problematic masculinities that give rise to violent, aggressive and generally derogatory behaviours towards girls. Gender-relevant strategies for work with boys include pursuing knowledge, improving relationships and applying justice (Connell, 1996). The success of such initiatives is as yet largely undocumented. Box 4.13 documents one initiative under way in Jamaican schools aimed at addressing the climate of low male achievement. The Change from Within programme in Jamaica demonstrates the importance of allowing schools to identify strategies relevant to their community of learners, and of giving teachers the opportunity to devise their own strategies.

Curriculum reform

It is a widely shared objective of education policy that boys and girls should be given equal opportunities for success and advancement while at school. The role of the curriculum in this process is crucial, in that it is a key source of pupils' knowledge about, and orientation within, the social world. This is widely acknowledged, and many countries have initiated reforms both to reduce biases in subject choices confronting girls and boys, and to remove any implications of gender stereotyping from textbooks and other teaching materials. These have often been successful. A recent assessment of twenty standard textbooks used in Ugandan primary schools for the teaching of English, mathematics, social studies and science concludes that the content of the books and their illustrations were, for each subject, neutral in their representation of gender (Muhwezi, 2003). A rather different approach was taken in Cambodia, where a reformed curriculum for primary and secondary levels was introduced in 1996 with new textbooks and teacher manuals. It stated that efforts were made to promote concepts of gender fairness and social inclusion in these materials. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education's Pedagogical Research Department took the view that gender fairness would be expressed mainly in an evenly balanced number of male and female illustrations or examples, rather than in a way that would explicitly challenge cultural norms and traditions. Thus, women are shown as weavers, girls as helping with housework; men

as managers and boys helping on the family farm. In this case, then, the objective of achieving 'gender fairness and neutrality' is held within the existing context of beliefs, customs and attitudes, rather than as a means of challenging them (Velasco, 2003).

Irrespective of the formal curriculum, the ways in which it is interpreted by teachers remains an overwhelming influence. In Uganda, a majority of the primary teachers are male, and sexist attitudes are by no means absent from their ranks. Discriminatory attitudes are not removed by virtue of a new curriculum, where they are embedded in the patriarchal nature of the wider society. Teachers reflect these attitudes as much as any other citizens (Muhwezi, 2003). Thus, reform – however successful in a formal sense – needs to be underpinned by complementary actions in a range of different policy arenas if it is to achieve its aims. Malawi provides an example of thoroughgoing approach to reform where text-writers, administrators, managers and teachers are all trained in gender awareness in the context of managing the new curriculum. Even there, challenges are to be faced if the intentions of the reforms are to be achieved (Box 4.14).

Empowering women teachers

A critical challenge is that of recruiting female teachers – particularly for rural or isolated schools. In Bangladesh, despite the formulation of a government policy to reserve 60% of primary school teachers' posts for women,¹⁰ implementation has not been successful. During the 1990s over 30,000 female teachers were recruited, but in order to achieve gender parity in teachers of government primary schools 60,000 more females were needed (USAID, 2002). The failure to fulfil a sufficient female quota appears to be largely regional and principally limited to formal, government schools and *madrasas*.¹¹ This is due to the existence of a range of barriers to recruitment and deployment, including restrictions against women travelling or living away from the family home, accommodation problems in distant locations, physical security, and women's family responsibilities.

In many countries, women teachers require support and encouragement, as they often work in difficult social environments. In Rajasthan, India, the Shikshakarmi Project recognized that to encourage enrolment of girls and to develop awareness among women, Shikshakarmis were

10. In 1991 the government revised the required qualifications to attract more female teachers to the profession. A male candidate must have a High School Certificate (HSC), which is obtained by successfully passing the HSC public examination at the end of twelve years of schooling. But a female candidate with a Senior School Certificate (SSC) can apply at the end of ten years of schooling. To meet the quota, those female candidates who pass the test, even with lower scores, are able to become primary-school teachers (see USAID, 2002).

11. Studies have shown that over 40% of primary-school teachers were female; this proportion was much higher in urban schools (71%) than rural schools (29%). Information received from government sources suggests that about 31% of the teachers in government schools were female. Nearly 90% of NGO non-formal school teachers were female but the share of female teachers in *madrasas* was extremely low at only 5% (Chowdhury et al., 1999).

Box 4.14. Curriculum reform in Malawi

The Government of Malawi, through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) established the Gender Appropriate Curriculum (GAC) unit at the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) in 1992. The unit was charged with the responsibility of incorporating gender sensitivity into the primary curriculum, primary teacher-training curricula (both residential and in-service). The unit ensures that the content in instructional materials has words, statements, examples and illustrations that are neutral as regards female and male images. It also ensures that teacher-training programmes are designed to eliminate gender bias in the classroom, that all primary teacher in-service training is gender appropriate and that senior Ministry of Education officials are aware of gender issues in their policies and practices (MIE, 1996).

Primary and secondary textbooks have been revised to make them gender sensitive and to portray girls and women in more positive roles. Training has been provided for school textbook writers, editors and some teachers to make their work gender sensitive. As of 1999, training of key professionals on gender issues had been conducted with 240 primary education advisors; 9 district education managers (out of 24); 125 teacher-training college tutors; 10,000 serving teachers; and 10 community development assistant trainers (Kadyoma et al., 1999).

Major attempts have been made at primary level to have more illustrations of women and girls in the revised textbooks. For example, in the Standard 3 English *Pupils' Book*, 52% of the illustrations depict female characters, whereas the earlier school textbooks were predominantly illustrated with male characters. It

can be observed from the sample secondary textbooks that social studies and home economics have almost half of their illustrations depicting both male and female characters. On the other hand, in science and technology, most of the illustrations are predominantly male. Gender balance remains a challenge for the education sector at secondary-school level. Furthermore, gender stereotyping can be traced in some of the illustrations in some of the textbooks. For example, men are depicted as university graduates, police officers, radio announcers, journalists and doctors, whereas women are portrayed as nurses. However, overall, illustrations portray men and women in more positive roles. For example, there are illustrations of female engineers, female judges and female students doing experiments in a science class. There are many illustrations where men and women are doing things together.

In 1993, MoEST removed subject restrictions that barred girls from sciences at the primary and secondary levels. All subjects, including sciences, are open to all students. For example, boys can opt for subjects such as home economics and girls can opt for wood and metal work.

The Malawi primary curriculum is currently being reviewed through participatory approaches sensitive to gender. According to the *Primary Curriculum and Assessment Review (PCAR) Report* (Malawi, 2002), it is intended that boys' and girls' interests, values and needs will be reflected in the new curriculum. In the recommendations, there is a clear mention of the need to emphasize the development of literacy and numeracy skills, and other emerging issues such as gender equality and HIV/AIDS.

Source: Maluwa-Banda (2003).

needed in large numbers to make up for the shortfall of literate women in most rural areas, particularly in remote and difficult places. The low literacy rate and the indifference towards girls' education was deemed so great that urgent remedial action was necessary to hasten the progress of girls' schooling (Jain, 2003). Preparing *mahila* (female) Shikshakarmis therefore became a priority (Box 4.15).

Education systems remain overwhelmingly male at the top levels, with few women in positions of authority. In Bolivia only 16% of all head-teacher posts are held by women, and there are marked urban-rural differentials. Some of the problems cited by those women who are head teachers include the rejection of female authority, particularly in traditional communities, difficulties of travel to remote communities, low bargaining power with local authorities relative to their male counterparts, and occasionally abuse, particularly after alcohol consumption, by

members of local communities. While things are gradually changing for the better in terms of the numbers of women, these working conditions serve both as a major disincentive, and barrier, to women's effective participation in decision-making in higher levels of the education system (Pareja Lara, 2003).

In India, the Lok Jumbish programme in Rajasthan has created a Women Teachers' Forum (Adhyapika Manch). Its activities were initiated in 1994 on an experimental basis, with the purpose of enhancing women teachers' participation in residential teacher-training camps and to encourage them to develop themselves as trainers. Over the years, these forums have become an important activity to break isolation and assert women teachers' identities. They have also become rallying points for women teachers to develop as creative and articulate professionals.

Education systems remain overwhelmingly male at the top, with few women in positions of authority.

Box 4.15. Creating an informal cadre of women teachers in Rajasthan

The appointment of women teachers has been an important part of the educational discourse in India, and in Rajasthan in particular. In a state where segregation of men and women is strictly practised and purdah (the system of screening women from men and strangers by means of a veil or curtain) enforced, one of the major constraints to the enrolment of girls has been the absence of women teachers in schools located in remote areas.

There were no women teachers identified in the Shikshakarmi Pilot Project implemented in 1984. The initial document clearly stated the principle of two Shikshakarmis, one man and one woman in each village. It was felt that the presence of women Shikshakarmis in the village could help to create an environment that would be more conducive to encouraging girls to enrol in the schools. However, identifying and retaining women teachers continues to be challenging, requiring sensitive handling. A series of problems are faced by women Shikshakarmis, some of which are of a serious nature.

Teaching is not a traditional occupation for women in rural Rajasthan, unlike in the urban areas. The Mahila Shikshakarmis have had to struggle to establish

themselves as teachers, while simultaneously attaining approval from the family and village elders for this role. The fact that women teachers are required to travel outside their villages for training/workshop meetings and to interact with males and children from different castes has necessitated a change in the rules and norms governing households, the community and to some extent, the school environment. In general, where a woman is expected to cover her face and observe purdah in the presence of 'elders' and community men, the woman Shikshakarmi's role represents a step towards equality. It is also evident that the new role has enhanced her personal status and given her a sense of freedom.

The Mahila Prasikshan Kendras (training centres for women) were intended to increase the number of women teachers and thus the enrolment of girls in the project schools. They have shown that, given a supportive environment, women can be motivated to become learners. The first internal evaluation carried out by the Shikshakarmi Board in 1992 indicated that most women joined the centres as an opportunity to study and become self-reliant.

Source: Jain (2003).

Many girls get a late start in education and need help to catch up.

Innovative measures for out-of-school girls

Many girls get a late start in education and need help to catch up with their schooling, being too old to join the early grades of the primary-school system. Various non-formal initiatives exist to help them 'bridge' their schooling gap. These initiatives are crucial, as they respond in flexible ways to the requirements of young girls. Such initiatives can also be important for girls returning from participation in armed conflict, or who are displaced as refugees (Box 4.16).

Bridge courses are used by many NGOs to target out-of-school children and bring them into the mainstream. The MV Foundation, an NGO in Andhra Pradesh, India, began working with child workers and bonded children in 1991, to try to get them back into school. Given their early work experiences, the NGO found that both their educational and counselling needs could not be met by the formal school system. As a result, camps were organized in which the children were helped to catch up with their peers in formal schools. These camps were used to help the children make the transition from work to schooling and to encourage their parents to acknowledge the educational rights of their children.

The transition from work to school starts in the villages. The Foundation runs small 'motivation centres' where child workers and other out-of-school children are invited to spend a few hours. The role of a 'motivator-teacher' is to interact with the families and to talk with them about their aspirations. Within a few weeks, children are usually ready to go to the camp, although it is reported to take a little longer to motivate the families of girls. Once there, within six to eighteen months, children achieve competency equivalent to Grade VII pupils. Children are grouped according to their pace of learning. Teachers trained by the Foundation live with the children and interact with them for much of the time. While the timing for classroom work is strictly observed, teaching and learning is a round-the-clock activity. As and when the children achieve Grade VII competency they are encouraged to take entrance tests for residential schools or are enrolled in the middle school near their village. A large number of children from the camps have successfully passed the public entrance examinations for enrolment in residential schools. Over the years since 1991 this programme has gained tremendous community support. Local communities offer

Box 4.16. Education for adolescent girls in armed conflict

There are estimated to be over 1.5 million refugees of secondary-school age, of whom about 97% are not in school (UNHCR, 2002). A majority of these young people are girls. In most post-emergency situations, resources are focused on primary education because it is easier to organize classes for younger children than for older youth (Sinclair, 2001). It is hard for any child that has dropped out of school to pick up their studies again, but for adolescent girls and young women it can be particularly so. They may not attend schools in refugee camps because of lack of sanitary provision. They may have had little schooling in the first place and, scarred by war experience, may find it difficult to restart with children embarrassingly smaller and younger than themselves. They may be ostracized if they had babies as a result of rape during war. In some refugee camps pregnancy rates of 50% of all teenage girls are reported (UNHCR, 2002; Save the Children UK, 2002), and these young women may be especially isolated, shunned by both younger girls and older women – ‘too old for toys, but too young for motherhood’ (UNICEF, 1994).

Very little is known about the long-term effects of girls’ participation in conflict (McKay and Mazurana, 2000). In the armed forces, they may have had emotional attachments,

status and power (McConnan and Uppard, 2001). The return to civilian life can represent a step backwards, and it can be difficult to adapt to a traditional, authoritarian school system with little opportunity for individual agency.

Although there are few formal evaluations of best practice, educational provision should:

- acknowledge different roles and responsibilities taken on during conflict and the shifts in gender identities implied;
- validate positive skills, and the sense of power and agency of military life;
- address the potential loss of freedom felt by those returning to traditional communities and to school;
- be accessible and welcoming to pregnant girls and girl mothers;
- help girls to generate income, teaching a range of relevant skills and not only typically female activities;
- help them to reintegrate into families and communities (including working with communities, schools and teachers to change attitudes about the stigma attached to returning girls);
- provide access to information and care for reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS.

both resources and space to enable the bridge courses to run.

Bridge schools, organized either as residential camps or education centres within communities, appear to be a replicable, cost-effective mechanism for progress towards UPE. The benefits extend beyond the individual child to the community as a whole, because of the latter’s involvement and ownership of the process of getting out-of-school children into schools. On the other hand, a partnership between NGOs and the government is needed to ensure that there are sufficient formal schools to meet the educational needs of the children who are integrated via the bridge programmes.

The MV Foundation also runs an education centre for girls and women in difficult circumstances. Those who have been battered, abused or have been through a difficult life are made welcome. The Government of Andhra Pradesh sends women from all parts of the state to the centre. Here the objective is not only to get them into formal schools, because many of the older women do not opt for formal schooling. The objective is to help them to overcome their personal problems and prepare themselves for a productive life. Building the self-esteem and self-

confidence of such women is given priority (Ramachandran, 2003).

In Bangladesh, the government has taken an active role in establishing ‘satellite’ schools, which help disadvantaged children, especially girls, to enter schools. Initially 200 satellite schools were established, which grew to about 2,000 by 2002. They were managed by women teachers, paid by the government but selected by local management committees. Satellite schools began as a UNICEF-supported attempt to ‘bring the school to the girl child’. The schools reach Grades 2 or 3, when pupils switch to regular schools. Attendance is high, and the government plans to establish 20,000 such satellite schools within a few years (CAMPE/Education Watch, 1999).

Expanding ECCE to enhance parity in primary education

As Chapter 2 indicates, many countries are close to achieving gender parity in ECCE. Pupils tend to be either from the richer groups in society where parents can afford to send both female and male children to private centres, or the poorer groups for whom some targeted programmes are available and where gender parity is a deliberate objective.

Bridge schools are a replicable cost-effective mechanism for progress towards UPE.

Box 4.17. Impact of ECCE on primary gender ratios in Nepal

A recent study in Nepal’s Siraha District demonstrates the impact of ECCE on primary enrolment and retention. In this part of Nepal, ‘discrimination against girls and women ... still affects almost every area of their lives (and) ten girls die for every seven boys’. At national level, only 12.7% of Nepalese children of the relevant age group attend ECCE, and GPI in ECCE is exceptionally low at 0.79 (Annex, Table 3).

About 75% of children in the Siraha District start primary school. However, among those who have first attended ECCE centres, the intake rate stands at 95%. This impact of ECCE on primary enrolment is particularly strong for girls, as Table 4.3 shows.

Table 4.3. Boy/girl ratios in Grades 1 and 2 in schools in Sihara, Nepal (2000)

	ECCE group	Non-ECCE group
Boy/girl ratio Grade 1	50/50	61/39
Boy/girl ratio Grade 2	54/46	66/34

It can be seen that among the children going to school after ECCE, there is full parity in Grade 1, compared with more than three boys for every two girls in the control group. The boy/girl ratio in the ECCE group has increased by Grade 2, but not as much as in the control group.

Pass rates from Grades 1 and 2 are better for the children with ECCE experience than for those

without, as Table 4.4 shows. Of the children who attended ECCE, 11% were so well prepared that they skipped Grade 1 altogether.

Table 4.4. Pass rates in Grades 1 and 2 in schools in Sihara, Nepal (2000)

	ECCE group	Non-ECCE group
Pass rate Grade 1	81	61
Pass rate Grade 2	94	68

A comparison between the ECCE group in Sihara and national figures reveals marked differences in terms of promotion, repetition and drop-out, as Table 4.5 shows.

Table 4.5. Promotion, repetition and drop-out rates in Nepal, compared with ECCE groups in Sihara District (1998–2000)

		Promotion (%)	Repetition (%)	Drop-out (%)
Grade 1	National	41.7	36.7	21.6
	ECCE group	83.5	5.5	11
Grade 2	National	73.9	17.6	8.5
	ECCE group	95.1	2.2	2.7

In 2003, 14% of the children enrolled in Grade 1 in Nepal had attended ECCE. The Department of Education intends to increase this figure to 51% by 2009.

Source: Save the Children (2003).

Expanding ECCE would be beneficial to the gender balance in primary school.

Sharp expansion of ECCE may affect this gender balance: parents who are neither wealthy nor targeted may face financial constraints causing them to enrol their children selectively. However, if ECCE were to be expanded by increasing the number and scale of targeted programmes, gender parity might be sustained. In fact, there are strong indications that this would also be beneficial to the subsequent gender balance in primary school. This is well illustrated by the case of Nepal (Box 4.17).

The beneficial impact of ECCE on further learning has been demonstrated for a large number of programmes in many countries (Myers, 1995; Barnett, 1996; Deutsch, 1998; Duncan et al., 1998; Van der Gaag and Tan, 1998; Heckman, 1999; Ramey et al., 2000; Masse and Barnett, 2002). The gender-specific impact on school retention, in particular, has been

examined in a large and longitudinal study in eight Indian states (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 1993). Retention among the ECCE group was found to be between 10 and 20 percentage points higher than in the control group. Among the latter, drop-out rates by Grade 4 stood at 48.2% against 31.8% in the ECCE group. Girls benefited most from having attended ECCE, and this difference was found to be larger in higher grades.

Some typical differences between ECCE and primary school may explain why the former helps children, especially girls, to better prepare themselves for school. ECCE tends to be informal, flexible and learner-centred, and learning in ECCE tends to be playful, contextualized and activity-based. Usually the first language is spoken. Teaching and learning in primary education, by contrast, are more formal, rigid, teacher-centred, subject-based,

decontextualized and passive. The national language is usually the instruction language. Furthermore, ECCE can be a safer environment, especially if it is provided in the home or in small centres close to the home. Primary school can be more distant and the risk of in-school violence is larger; corporal punishment is more current in primary education than in ECCE. Finally, ECCE teaching staff tend to provide positive role models, especially for girls (Evans, 1997; Myers, 1997; Bernard van Leer Foundation, 2002).

Indeed, the Nepalese Impact Study (Box 4.17) reports that children with ECCE experience are more self-assured, capable and motivated. They are avid learners; they are quick to pick up new skills and information; and they have more social skills. It also points to the importance of parental involvement for a good transition to primary school. The parents of the ECCE children are more supportive towards their children, but also more assertive towards the teachers of the primary school. Other sources underline how institutional links between ECCE, primary school and parents prove critically important (Bernard van Leer Foundation, 2000; Korintus and Arato, 2003).

Synergies between early education and women's empowerment

Some ECCE programmes go further, to cater for the needs of the mothers, and in some cases the elder sisters, of children in ECCE. These mother-child programmes generate benefits – often at very low cost – that go far beyond those for the child. These include allowing the mother to do productive work; freeing the elder sister to attend school; in some cases, helping the professional development of the mother as an ECCE assistant or teacher; and, more generally, the empowerment of the mother bringing benefits also to the local community. Some examples of these kinds of initiatives follow.

The Entry Point programme in Nepal initially provided credit to small groups of five or six rural women, with a view to improving conditions in the local community. As women became economically active, the need for childcare became urgent. A solution was found by having each mother care for the children of the whole group one day per week, on a rotating basis. To improve the pedagogical quality of this informal and home-based form of day-care, an intensive four-day training was delivered by an NGO, as

well as a basic kit of materials. All this was done in such a way that even illiterate women could 'deliver' the curriculum (Myers, 1993). The synergies are obvious: self-generated ECCE capacity; a good-quality input at low cost; personal benefits with implications for the wider community. A comparable programme is run by the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India (www.gdrc.org/icm/sewa.html).

In Jamaica, the Teenage Mothers Project aims at combating the high incidence of repeated pregnancy. Both the young mothers and their children are engaged in learning activities, on the grounds that educating the mother not only helps to prevent repeated pregnancy but also raises the mother's awareness of the importance of learning, and hence her support for the education of her child. The learning achievement of these children was significantly better than that of children in a control group – an advantage that was sustained throughout schooling (Degazon-Johnson, 2002).

The Bodh school project in the slums of Jaipur, Rajasthan, recognizes that education has an important function in social change, and that parental involvement is crucial. Local women's groups formed the link between school and neighbourhood. Girls attending the primary school brought along their younger siblings they had to look after. Accordingly it was decided to add a pre-school to the project to provide quality care for the younger children and to release the elder sisters from this task. Teachers were recruited from existing women's groups and given training. Some adolescent girls became assistants to the mother teachers. Obviously, such strong links between ECCE and primary school contribute to a good transition between the two. Again, there are self-generated capacities, low costs, and multiple benefits (Kullar and Menon, 1997). Elsewhere, many other ECCE centres, such as those in China, have been created with a view to setting elder sisters free from the task of caring (Herz et al., 1991).

The Irish 'Community Mothers' are trained and supported by family development nurses to pay home visits to young mothers in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, during the first two years of the life of the child. Apart from the positive impact on mother and child, important benefits are reported for the Community Mothers themselves: enhanced self-esteem, more confidence, a larger

Empowerment of the mother brings benefits to the local community.

The education level of mothers is strongly associated with the chances of their daughters being enrolled in school.

social network, and better relations with husband and own children (Molloy, 2002). Similar effects – notably a better power balance within the family – occurred in the Mother-Child Education Programme in Turkey (Kagıtcıbası et al., 1995).

NGOs and education provision

What works in learning programmes for young and adult women?

As shown above, the education level of mothers is strongly associated with the chances of their daughters being enrolled in school. Chapter 2 indicates that this effect also occurs when mothers become educated at a later age (Lauglo, 2001). This points to the importance of learning opportunities for young and adult women, not only as a right and a goal in itself, but also in enhancing enrolment and gender parity in education (Torres, 2003).

Earlier programmes for women tended to focus on literacy acquisition, largely in isolation from any applied context. Barriers existed that were

similar to those that kept most of these same women out of school when young: the opportunity costs of not being available for household or other work; the distance to the class; a learning environment dominated by male teachers. Opposition by the husband – failing to see the benefits from their wives becoming literate or even feeling threatened by it – further hindered enrolment and completion (Robinson-Pant, 2003, p. 4).

But literacy training today is increasingly combined with the acquisition of other skills relevant to the learner, and this has been especially beneficial to women. It has been recognized more widely that women will only enrol in programmes, complete them and retain their literacy skills, if such programmes meet specific learning needs, such as in the areas of family planning, saving and credit, maternity and health. One recent study found attendance rates of 80% in programmes with an income-generating component, compared with 20% without it (Oxenham et al., 2002).

Careful sensitivity to local circumstance and preparatory research into the ways in which local women use literacy and other skills have proved critical to success (Box 4.18). Preferably, programmes are developed in dialogue with the learner, and in some cases even learner-generated materials and/or indigenous knowledge are applied (Hanemann, 2003; Rogers et al., 1999).

Without such sensitivity, there is a risk of counterproductive effects. Dighe (1995) found, for example, that some textbooks bore the suggestion that women are unable to adopt hygienic practices in their homes unless they became literate. Such tacit assumptions – that illiteracy equals ignorance – can demotivate women.

Provision modes, too, must adapt to the daily life of women. This can imply the creation of opportunities for women to learn and build networks at the same time, as in the MOVA programme in Brazil (Stromquist, 1997), but it can also result in more individualized teaching and self-learning, as developed by the United Mission to Nepal (Robinson-Pant, 2003). When successful, these initiatives can be important vehicles for political participation by women who become newly empowered (Box 4.19).

Box 4.18. Legal literacy in India

Believing that literacy alone is not sufficient to empower women, MARG (Multiple Action Research Group) started a project to educate women about their legal rights. The Delhi-based NGO developed a series of manuals on twenty-three laws which affected women's lives, using colour-coded covers to identify the subject matter: for example, red indicated marriage laws, blue signified citizens' rights versus the police. MARG ran three-day legal literacy workshops, acting as a resource to other community organizations (some of which were implementing non-formal education programmes). Both literate and non-literate women attended these workshops and through role-play, video and 'reading' the simple, clearly illustrated manuals, began to gain more awareness of their rights. For some older women, the experience of using the manuals as tools in the workshop inspired them to begin to attend literacy classes to learn to read more. The manuals provided support in the long term for women to take legal and social action: women labourers in Bihar learned about the Equal Remuneration Act, subsequently refusing to work in the fields until they were paid equal wages, while showing their employers the relevant sections in their manual as evidence. In another case, community members prevented a 14-year-old girl from being forcibly married after learning about the Child Marriage Restraint Act.

Source: Monga (2000).

Box 4.19. Popular education and women's political participation

Although cross-national multivariate analysis hints at a connection between higher education and women's representation in formal politics, qualitative evidence from developing countries shows that one factor supporting adult women's informal political engagement is popular education. Usually embarked upon for political reasons, by political parties interested in creating or strengthening a support base in politically inactive communities, adult literacy drives and popular civic education have in some instances resulted in a marked shift in the level of women's activity in civil and political society. Cases in point include the Bolivarian discussion circles in urban low-income communities created by Hugo Chávez's party prior to his election as Venezuelan President in 1999, the adult education drives across Nicaragua pursued by the Sandinista party once it won power in 1979, and Uganda's 'chakka-muchakka' political awareness and self-defence training in the second half of the 1980s. Each of these resulted in a marked increase in the number of women participating in local and national elections, but also engaging in protests and seeking to advance their interests through associational activities in civil society.

One of the most celebrated examples of adult education providing a catalyst for political engagement, however, was the role of the Indian Total Literacy Campaign in mobilizing women in Andhra Pradesh in the early 1990s to fight for prohibition. The anti-arack (country liquor) campaign developed out of group discussions held by women participants in a Freire-style literacy programme, which had incorporated into its post-literacy primers critical stories about men's alcohol abuse, to reflect rural women's intense

concerns about this subject. The agitation began in Nellore District of Andhra Pradesh in January 1991 with boycotts of liquor shops and efforts to control men's drinking. Over time, connections between the granting of liquor sales licences and networks through which the ruling party raised illicit campaign finances were revealed, and opposition parties, particularly the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), quickly saw that electoral profit was to be made from supporting the women's campaign and exposing the corruption of the incumbent party (Congress). By 1994 the TDP won the state elections, partly on a promise of prohibition.

Although a powerful example of the potential role of literacy groups for adult women in galvanizing political action (Dighe, 1995), this case does not really explain whether it was literacy per se or the opportunity to reflect collectively, using an organizational structure provided through the Total Literacy Campaign, that produced political action. In addition, the rapid claw-back of the gains women had made once the TDP was in power raises concerns about the sustainability of women's political engagement. By the time the TDP won a second term in office in the late 1990s it was able to retract its promise of prohibition, no longer able to afford to eschew the illicit earnings to be gleaned from the auction of liquor licenses (Bhatkal, 1997). Although the TDP had set up committees for monitoring the prohibition policy, women's representation on these committees was weak and unsustainable. Some women from the anti-arack movement were unable to participate effectively in decision-making in the bureaucratic arena – perhaps because of a lack of education and training in the style and practices of bureaucracies.

Source: Goetz (2003).

Literacy programmes targeted at men are scarce. An example is the Mexican Education and Paternity programme, which addresses paternal behaviour and tries to break the circle of passing on gender stereotypes from generation to generation (Hanemann, 2003).

The reality is sometimes less than ideal. Often, adult learning programmes have lower priority than schooling, also in terms of budget allocation. Teachers are poorly paid and volunteers are insufficiently prepared, especially when – with the best of intentions – attempts are made to increase the proportion of female teachers. Because fewer women than men are literate, good female teachers are harder to find. In some cases, young schoolgirls may be recruited but these bring insufficient life experience to the classroom, which is problematic in programmes combining literacy

training with other learning objectives. Nevertheless many positive experiences do exist. The Unisa network for Adult Basic Education and Training in South Africa recruited and thoroughly trained over 3,000 educators, many of whom were unemployed women (McKay, 2003).

NGOs and education provision: new models

NGOs have been key instruments, in many countries, for boosting state efforts to achieve UPE and gender parity goals. South Asia in particular has a long history of indigenous NGOs that have worked on social mobilization and development, although the role of NGOs and their relationship to the state varies among the different countries. Bangladesh, for example, has several large NGOs, most notably the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee

NGOs have been key instruments in many countries for boosting state efforts to achieve UPE and gender parity goals.

NGOs serve as laboratories of innovative experimentation

(BRAC) which is an active and direct provider of education. In India, NGOs serve more as laboratories of innovative experimentation, which allows them to try out different models with local communities, to find the best solutions for addressing both short-term constraints and longer-term issues of inequality.

In Bangladesh, the recent increase in total primary enrolments and the 'reversal' of the gender gap has had much to do with the expansion in NGO-managed schools. According to one study, in the absence of such schools the gross rate would

have been 98 for girls and 97 for boys (instead of 109 and 104 respectively) (Chowdhury et al., 2002, p. 200). Hence there seems to be much positive gain arising from the activity of NGOs.

Furthermore, improvements in the gender gap seem to be traced to 'positive discriminatory' actions both by the state and by NGOs. A key example is provided by BRAC's Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) programme, which ensures that 70% of its students are both girls and from poorer families (Box 4.20). Other NGOs have also adopted this strategy but do not share BRAC's large coverage.¹²

Box 4.20. Gender-aware education provision: the BRAC NFPE model

BRAC schools provide non-formal primary education mainly in rural areas, for the poorest children (aged 8–10), who have never been enrolled or who have dropped out of the formal schools. BRAC employs a 'positive discriminatory' strategy, whereby 70% of school enrolments are girls and roughly 96% of teachers are female. Originally started as a three-year programme, it has been expanded to a four-year cycle, covering the whole primary curriculum (Grades 1–5).

The BRAC model is distinct in four of its aspects relevant to girls' education: the school facilities; the teachers and their training; the curriculum; and the level of community participation in the schools.

School facilities: Schools comprise thirty to thirty-three students and their small size encourages student participation and interaction. In addition, the relationship between teacher and student is enhanced. The schools require a minimum of 240 square feet of space, rented at minimal cost from a community member. The single-classroom structures are frequently bamboo or mud-walled and equipped with a blackboard and charts. All the materials (pencils, notebooks, textbooks) are provided by BRAC and the children contribute a sum of Tk5 a month. The proximity of schools to the homes of the target group is deliberate, in view of its importance for school enrolment and retention, particularly for girls. The school schedule is set in meetings with the parents. On average, classes meet six days a week for two and a half hours each day for the first and second grades and three hours for the others.

Teachers and teacher training: BRAC teachers are mainly women and have to be residents of the local village. Teachers are chosen from among the most educated in the village. The teacher undergoes an

initial intensive training for twelve days, whereby the basic concepts of learning theory are introduced and practical teaching exercises are undertaken. This is followed by annual refresher training of six days duration in preparation for each academic year. Additionally, teachers are required to attend a monthly one-day training session to discuss problems and to focus on experiences in the classroom. Teachers are paid roughly Tk500 a month (US\$9), which is much lower than salaries at formal schools. Nevertheless, there is very little absenteeism among teachers and wastage is less than 2% annually.

Curriculum: The BRAC curriculum is especially tailored to address the needs of rural and urban children. It is based on information about the learners, their families, their economic conditions, levels of cognitive development and psychological and physiological growth. The curriculum incorporates the competencies set by the government for formal primary school but is based on a participatory approach to learning. Emphasis is placed on active-learning methodologies that facilitate discussion of topics, rather than mere memorization. Only a small amount of homework is assigned.

Community participation: The participation of the parents and the community at large plays a critical role within the schools and is one of the most important factors in their success. Community members and parents participate in various ways in the school management committee (composed of three parents, a community leader and a teacher), in parents' meetings, in the establishment of the schools, and in setting the school schedules.

Sources: BRAC (2002); Lovell and Fatema (1989); Fransman et al. (2003).

12. Of a sample of 2,151 children enrolled in non-formal schools surveyed, 76% were studying in BRAC schools (CAMPE/Education Watch, 1999).

The number of NGOs in Bangladesh has increased dramatically over the last twenty years (USAID, 2002, p. 27) to some four hundred working in the education sector alone. Some future caution may be required as regards the range of NGO approaches and their quality of provision – easy availability of funding may create an artificial increase in numbers of NGOs, not all of whom may share the same levels of commitment or ability to create as positive outcomes as those generated by BRAC and other large NGOs, such as Proshika, in Bangladesh.

The positive impacts of NGO involvement in education provision for girls – where the strategies are girl-focused – have also been demonstrated elsewhere. Programmes supported by NGOs in Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, southern Sudan and Uganda are all reported to have had some success in this respect (Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder, 2002). In Ethiopia, for example, total enrolment increased by 8.9% in the region where World Learning operates a community school programme, and girls' enrolment has increased by 13.8%. In these schools, girls' attendance also improved (with 36% of girls in class, compared with 28% in government schools). The gross enrolment rate for girls in one district in Guinea where Save the Children is working increased from 31% to 37%. In southern Sudan, CARE's work in sensitizing communities about the importance of sending children, in particular girls, to school is reported to have increased girls' enrolment by 96%. Girls comprise 47% of enrolment in Action Aid's community schools in Uganda, and almost half of those transferring to government schools are girls (Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder, 2002). In addition, schools supported by Save the Children US in Uganda are reported to have benefited girls' access to education in particular (Rose, 2003b).

Other interventions by NGOs may also yield positive benefits for girls' education. The micro-finance revolution in many parts of the world is a subject of contention as regards its effectiveness in reaching the poorest, and in empowering women, but positive benefits for households' abilities to save money and invest in children's education have been noted. In South Asia, evidence suggests that the provision of loans to women has a stronger effect in promoting children's education, particularly girls' education, and in reducing child labour than loans to men.

This may well reflect increased bargaining power among women, and that women generally gain access to micro-credit in both Bangladesh and India as members of 'groups' formed specifically for this purpose (Drèze and Kingdon, 2001; Kabeer, 2003a).

Empowering women, building new communities

What does 'empowering women' mean?

When women are able to take control of their lives, they hold the key to change in many areas of human activity. Linkages between human rights and women's empowerment are crucial. Rights for women will have limited meaning if they do not feel able to come forward to claim their rights. Formal knowledge and literacy skills are one aspect of this process. However the trade-offs between claiming rights and disrupting familial relations that operate on the basis of the prevailing gender order are fraught with tension. Providing women with support in this process is important for agencies that seek to 'empower'

When women are able to take control of their lives, they hold the key to change in many areas of human activity.

Table 4.6. Summary of human rights education poster campaign (Bangladesh)

Title	Description	Statement
Contribution to development	Shows both men and women together participating in development work, i.e. cutting earth to build a road.	We have built this world and this civilization; men and women contributed equally to it
Child marriage	Points out a series of undesirable consequences of child marriage – childbirth at an early age leading to ill-health because of which wife fails to carry out family responsibilities; this failure leads to bad relations between her and other members of the family which eventually can result in divorce.	Many brides are crying because of child marriage; nobody pays attention to the flood of their tears
Violation of multiple marriage policy	Indicates that it is essential for a husband to have the approval of his existing wife before remarrying. Without this, he may have to face jail and/or pay a fine.	Facing jail and a fine for remarrying without the consent of present wife or for ignoring her disapproval for such marriage.
Abuse of women	Indicates that abuse of women is a criminal offence; one can be sent to the lock-up.	Those who torture women, send them to the lock-up.
Registration of marriage	Indicates that it is important to register marriage, as women are often helpless after divorce.	Husband divorced, what am I to do? Married by reciting Kalema but without registration.
Bride money	Indicates that in case of divorce, the husband must refund the bride money in all circumstances.	Have to pay the bride money whether dead or alive.
Verbal divorce	Indicates that a marriage cannot be cancelled by verbally pronouncing divorce three times.	Divorce is not legal if given verbally.

Source: Rafi and Chowdhury (2000).

**Education
can help
women
question
rather than
accept.**

women. Without support structures in place, the risks may be too great for women who are then exposed to the brunt of potential backlashes.

An interesting approach was adopted by BRAC in Bangladesh to try to link the societal constraints on women's equality to the educational horizons open to them in a country-wide poster campaign. They distributed 700,000 posters throughout Bangladesh as part of a human rights education campaign. The subject of the posters (Table 4.6) was based on interpretations of the Koran and Islamic practices but met with strong opposition from religious organizations, who perceived the campaign an intrusion into their professional territory and, moreover, an attempt to affect their socio-economic interests. After meeting with such resistance, BRAC concluded that 'development organizations should pre-empt such opposition by spelling out their objectives to potential critics, and formulating programmes that do not provide scope for opponents to undermine their development activities' (Rafi and Chowdhury, 2000, p. 19).

The Mahila Samakhya experience

While the education of women and girls has been central to national discourse in India for over a century, complex and deep-rooted barriers to women's access to education remain. It has been argued that it is only when women's agency is developed to address these barriers themselves and when they are empowered, that the ground would be set for their participation in the education process. The Mahila Samakhya programme, working in several Indian districts, set out to do this, using innovative approaches. It saw the role of education as helping women to question rather than accept, in order to take control of their own lives; it also aimed to build conscious and independent collectives of women

(*sanghas*) which are to initiate and sustain processes of social change (Jandhyala, 2003).

The programme design consciously moved away from conventional development approaches: no targets were set, and no services were to be delivered. Instead, the focus was to be on enabling women to identify their own learning priorities. Its principal strategy is to organize women into *sanghas*, which become the forums for reflection and mutual solidarity, and a means for women to articulate their needs in a range of interconnected ways.

The focus on collectives was itself a conscious decision and a departure from the usual emphasis on individual beneficiaries. Collective power helps women to overcome disadvantages that extend beyond material things to perceptions of their own abilities and capabilities. The lessons from the women's movement here, in highlighting the need for group solidarity, were strong. Today, of course, the significance of groups and collectives has been recognized as an effective strategy for reaching varied social and community groups and hence forms the basis of most development initiatives.

As the programme does not specify any one agenda, its personnel are continually challenged to translate objectives into workable strategies. This requires responding flexibly and sensitively to the needs and demands of the *sanghas*. A major task has been to remain focused on the continuing learning process. Furthermore, as empowerment is not something to be given out, but to be experienced personally before it can be facilitated in others, the programme provides opportunities for individual decision-making, innovation and creativity.

Conclusions

This chapter indicates the ways in which education systems, policies and programmes must respond flexibly and sensitively to gender issues. Gender inequalities are prevalent everywhere, but take different forms as contexts and prospects change. Accordingly, national priorities will differ, as will the perspectives and contexts from which ideas for change emerge.

Four major points emerge from this assessment of the initiatives most likely to promote gender parity and equality in education.

First, the state must play the leading role in promoting equal Education for All. This has been the case in most of the countries in which considerable progress has been seen. Legislative changes promoting gender equality are important for creating an enabling environment for girls' education. The planning and management of educational infrastructure and supplies, managing incentives schemes, regulating the actions of teachers and reforming curricula, are all activities requiring government initiative, albeit with the support of other non-state actors. Strong public commitment is indispensable, because civil society inputs cannot be guaranteed: changes in the social and financial environment may mean that NGOs, faith-based or private providers, may not always play a consistent role. However, it is also clear that states are sometimes not in the best position to deliver education, particularly in conflict situations or where public structures are very weak.

Second, measures to redistribute resources within education, and more broadly in other sectors, in order to meet girls' specific educational needs, are a major priority. Much can be done to reduce the direct and indirect costs of educating girls that families have to face. Targeted education-contingent subsidies have an important place in such a strategy. However there is a range of wider economic and social policies to remove discrimination in pay and at work, to change the social norms underlying discriminatory practice, and to remove the pernicious influence of child labour, which many governments – and non-state bodies – need to pursue.

Third, multi-sectoral partnerships are essential for achieving Education for All. The roles of NGOs, religious organizations, state and social movements are all important. Chapter 1 shows that most countries have committed themselves to achieving non-discrimination in education, across several international instruments and conference pledges. To realize these, there must be a greater effort to hold diverse partners accountable for their actions and their impact on gender equality.

Finally, this chapter shows that social change may be slow, but it cannot be achieved without directly engaging women and young girls in its process. This chapter focuses on women as active agents for securing transformation. Education is an important instrument to support that process. Building and liberating women's critical capacities is important if they are to be partners in change as well as major beneficiaries of it. ■

Social change cannot be achieved without directly involving women and young girls in its process.